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CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
If the gubernatorial elections were held today, who of the five who have already expressed their intention to run will you vote for?

Let your voice be heard!
Go to
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to cast your vote.

128 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Bat Plague

A mysterious and deadly bat disease discovered just two winters ago has now spread to at least six states.

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Green Forum

Local conservation strategies and community involvement were in full display last week in Pohnpei.

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Annual tourism revenue to plunge $339M—MVA

Due to federalization, Northwest flight cuts, dip in Korean arrivals

"These changes are going to decimate the CNMI economy if seats can't be recovered. The CNMI will become a ghost town."

—Perry Tenorio, MVA managing director

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The CNMI will lose $339 million in annual tourism revenue with the exclusion of Chinese and Russian tourists from the federal visa waiver program, Northwest Airlines' impending reduction of flights, and the continued dip in visitor arrivals from Korea, according to Marianas Visitors Authority projections.

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DENTAL CARE HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Lori Serna, a dental hygienist at Seventh Day Adventist Dental Clinic, shows Koblerville Elementary School students Dorcy Ayuyu, left, and Jaybriana Manalo, right, the proper way to brush one's teeth yesterday as part of the Children's Dental Health Month activities in February. Besides school visits, SDA Dental Clinic will also have a free dental care for children from low-income families on Friday, Feb. 6, from 8am to 12pm.

ON LOSS OF RUSSIANS, CHINESE VISITORS

Bleak years ahead for big hotels, car rentals

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Major hotels and car rental firms anticipate the beginning of "dim" years following the expected loss of Russia and China markets with the federalization of CNMI immigration starting June 1.

Public Law 110-29 sets up a Guam-CNMI visa waiver program that initially will not include visitors from China and Russia. The Department of Homeland Security said it needs 12 to 18 months to assess and then set up the necessary security protocols for the two markets.

Pacific Islands Club director of sales and marketing Kanae Quinn said the CNMI doesn't

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DEA wants local cops back

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

An agent of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration yesterday said the federal agency wants local enforcement officers reinstated to the joint CNMI-DEA Task Force to deal with the problem of methamphetamine or "ice" trafficking in the Commonwealth.

Holcomb

The CNMI government separately said it is still interested in reviving the joint task force but with certain conditions to prevent the "appalling" incident involving the task force and the search on Chinese passengers aboard an inaugural charter flight to the CNMI from happening again.

"We [DEA] can make a big difference in this community but the reality is, there are only two agents here. We can't do it alone. We need DPS' [Department of Public Safety] help, DPS needs our help. We need your help," DEA senior special agent Daniel Holcomb told the Saipan Chamber of Commerce yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

He said there have been

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Flame Sako Resort land lease OK'd

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The Legislature voted yesterday to approve a Korean firm's proposal to lease more than 100,000 square meters of land in As Matius to build a multi-million dollar resort.

By a vote of 25-2 the House and Senate granted Flame Sako Resort and Spa the right to proceed with the $50 million-$60 million resort.

Flame Sako president Dae Sik Kang said through a translator that he was confident the Legislature would approve the lease because he considers everyone in the CNMI his friends and family.

'Privileged'

With the CNMI's current economic slump, Flame Sako must be commended for coming to

See FLAME on Page 4

Local

CPA files emergency regulations on tariff rates

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

An emergency regulation that imposes new tariff rates in local seaports was filed by the Commonwealth Ports Authority in an effort to fast track the implementation of increased rates.

In a 10-page document published last Jan. 28, the agency indicated the immediate need to enforce the 90-percent hike on all seaport fees to avoid the adverse effect of "management takeover" at the agency.

It cited that current loan balance of CPA and its at risk default of $35 million.

"Any further delay in cost recovery for any rates or fees would threaten the public welfare with the specter of a default and acceleration of the balance of approximately $35 million due and/or a takeover in management of the Saipan seaport resulting in even more increased fees, more detrimental to the public," the regulation stated.

Last Jan. 14, the CPA board approved the recommended hike. However, stakeholders had requested a delay of its implementation citing the cycle of shipping schedules.

An emergency regulation becomes effective immediately upon filing with the Commonwealth Register and delivery to the governor. It is also exempted to the commenting period as required in any regulation.

"These rules and regulations provide for the immediate increase fees that will allow CPA to generate sufficient revenue to maintain the 1.25 percent revenue-to-bond payment ratio at all times for the duration of the bond," the regulation stated.

CPA is compelled by its bond indenture agreement with the Bank of Guam for the seaport revenue bonds to pledge its revenue from its operations toward debt service.

Yesterday, CPA executive director Efrain Camacho revealed that seaport rates had not been adjusted for the last five years. He added that analysis of the most recent seaport financial condition forced a 90-percent hike in the terminal tariff to meet the requirements of the bond indenture.

Though disappointed, Camacho said stakeholders understand the CPA's situation.

Saipan Tribune learned that in 1998 and 2005, CPA and Bank of Guam—as the bond trustee—signed the seaport revenue bonds committing CPA's revenue to service the principal and interest in return for financing for the seaport construction and renovation.

The bond agreement requires CPA to have sufficient revenue to service the debt.

Fiscal Year 2007 audit of CPA disclosed that the agency's debt service ratio is .843 and so CPA must immediately implemented cost recovery measures.

'New rates'

CPA's terminal tariff effective last Wednesday included wharfage of $11.40 per revenue ton for all cargo other than liquefied petroleum products offloaded or on-loaded by pipeline; and $8.55 per revenue ton for liquid petroleum products which includes gasoline, diesel, bunkers, and other liquid petroleum products.

Limitations are also provided to the ocean bill-of-lading transshipments which sets a minimum $2.38 per revenue ton if the final destination of the cargo is a port within the CNMI.

Except for military and government-owned vessels, a port entry fee is collected. These include $220.40 for vessels of 1,000 registered gross tons or less; $438.90 for those between 1,001 and 2,000 registered gross ton and up.

The CPA declares that the commercial docks and wharves of the CNMI are intended for active loading and unloading vessels.

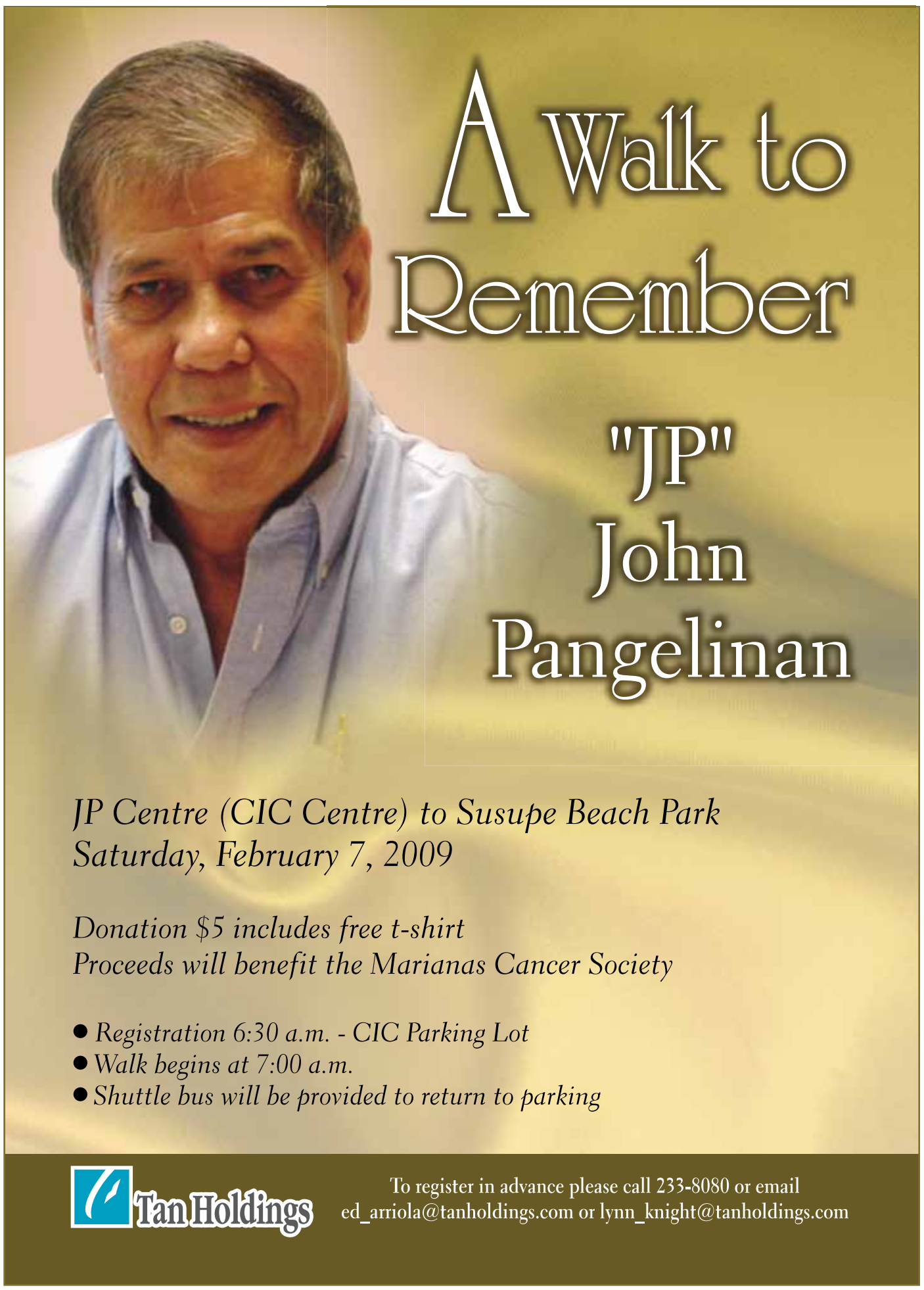
The regulation also declared a bunker fee of $0.86 per barrel for residual oil and $1.43 per barrel for diesel fuel.

A new rate for the home port fee was also established by the regulation, along with the passenger fee which shall charge $16.76 per person that boards a vessel through any port or harbor.

For the parking fees, a dollar is charged for a minimum of one hour parking at the CPA property, while vehicles with a 25-seat capacity shall pay a monthly fee of $125 per vehicle while $100 for those vehicles less 125 seats.

Taxi cabs are charge $15 monthly until January 2010 and which thereafter will pay $25 per taxi cab.

Seaport tenants who park at the port of Saipan public parking stalls shall also pay an annual fee of $35 per vehicle; while frequent community parking permit fee amounts to $400 annually and $250 semi-annually.


A Walk to Remember
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FAA approves $1M to upgrade airport's public address system

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Francisco S. Ada-Saipan International Airport will soon have a more reliable and accurate public address system following disclosure yesterday that the Federal Aviation Administration has verbally approved funding for the project.

Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Efrain Camacho said that close to $1 million will be used to buy and install the new public address system.

It was learned that since the establishment of Saipan international airport, the PA system has never been repaired or replaced due to funding concerns.

Camacho placed the project among its priorities this fiscal year.

"As soon as we receive the written approval from FAA, this is the No. 1 project we will go out [and do] immediately," he told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday, adding that the installation will take about four months only.

At present, Camacho said, CPA is preparing all the project's requirements, including placing effective signages and symbols for the hearing-impaired.

"Once we complete all these requirements, works will continue as scheduled," he said.

Camacho said the agency is conducting full assessment and study on the current PA system to determine what other components will be considered for the new system.

"Hopefully, we can see a new PA system within the year," he said, citing the "confusion" created by the existing equipment.

Last month, representatives from FAA were on a two-day visit to ask for CPA's list of priority projects that could be included in President Obama's proposed economic stimulus package.

Camacho said a more "formal" discussion about the projects is scheduled next month.

The executive director said the two top airport projects that need immediate resolution are the runway rehabilitation and the public address system.

However, before runway rehabilitation can be done, CPA needs to convert the parallel taxiway to a temporary runway, which is now ongoing. Also funded by FAA, the $4 million project is scheduled for completion in July 2009.

"Once we complete the conversion, that's the only time we can start the rehabilitation of the runway. We asked FAA to entirely fund it," Camacho said, optimistic on the positive action by the federal government.

Professor journeys once more into the deep

No strangers to the craggy landscape of undersea volcanoes, Geosciences Professor Dr. Robert J. Stern and graduate student Julia Ribeiro are once again on their way to the Western Pacific Ocean near Guam.

With funding from the National Science Foundation, Stern and Ribeiro will study submarine volcanoes in the Mariana Islands in early February. The region includes the U.S. territory of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The University of Texas at Dallas researchers will study underwater volcanoes near the Mariana Islands in the Western Pacific.

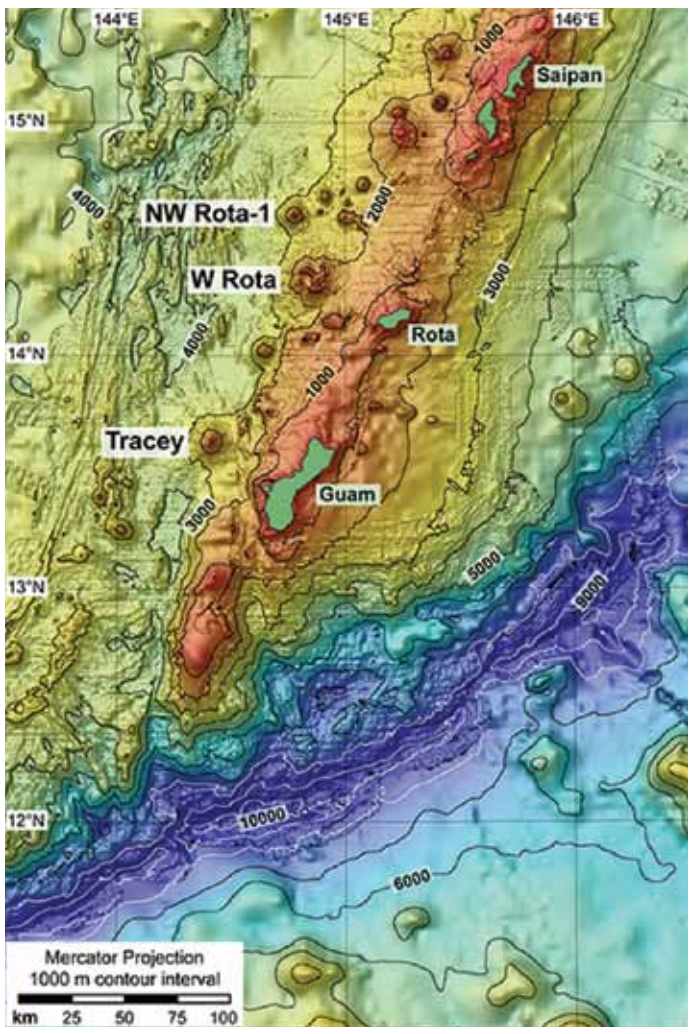
The team sets sail from Guam aboard the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology Research Vessel *Natsushima* and will take along an unmanned, tethered submarine robot called a HYPER-DOLPHIN. Such sophisticated "remotely operated vehicles" allow researchers to study the sea floor and collect rock samples. ROVs allow a team of scientists to observe the sea floor, a distinct advantage over more limited manned submersibles.

Building on their previous work in the area, the researchers will target three volcanoes: Tracey, NW Rota-1 and West Rota. Tracey, an extinct volcano west of Guam, has never been studied before. The volcano will net 1.5 days of diving before the team sails to NW Rota-1, a submarine volcano that has been erupting since Spring 2004.

"We're really excited to see if NW Rota-1 is still erupting," Stern said. "Last time it was checked (April 2006), it was very active."

The final dive takes place on the steep inner crater, or "caldera," of the extinct volcano West Rota. The team plans two days of diving along the inner caldera wall to take a look at an exposed region that has been intensely altered and mineralized. The spot is thought to feature the roots of an ancient, underwater hydrothermal system that was exposed when the volcano collapsed.

Stern and Ribeiro have been to these deep waters before. They used a Shinkai 6500 submarine to sample the sea floor around the Challenger Deep portion of Mariana Trench. At a depth of nearly seven miles, it is the deepest place on earth. Stern's research team expects to return to the area for 10 more ROV dives this summer. ***(UT-D)***



The three volcanoes to be studied are NW Rota-1, W Rota and Tracey.

Newly created ad-hoc group backs the repeal of Article 12

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

A new independent ad-hoc committee has started stimulating discussion on the repeal of Article 12 of the CNMI Constitution, which restricts land ownership only to persons of Northern Marianas descent.

The group said repealing Article 12 in its entirety will bring about economic development for the CNMI.

Efrain F. Camacho, chairman of the ad-hoc committee, said yesterday that among these efforts is an upcoming forum to stimulate discussion on the land alienation provision of the Constitution ahead of a possible referendum in 2011.

"2011 is not far away to start these discussions," said Camacho. "We want to bring the issue of Article 12 to the surface for the voters to work on."

Camacho said the forum follows the group's recent meeting with the CNMI Youth Congress where it urged youth leaders to help educate young voters and other residents about the social and economic benefits of repealing Article 12.

Alex Sablan, a member of the ad-hoc committee, also briefed the Saipan Chamber of Commerce during its general membership meeting yesterday about the group's plan to hold a forum to debate the pros and cons of Article 12.

Besides Camacho and Sablan, the other core members of the ad-hoc committee are Sen. Maria Pangelinan, David M. Sablan, JM Guerrero, former Washington Rep. Edward Pangelinan, Marian Aldan-Pierce and Ben Cruz.

Article 12 stipulates that only persons of Northern Marianas descent may buy or own land in the CNMI.

Section 805 of the Covenant between the United States and the CNMI allows the CNMI to amend or repeal its land alienation restrictions 25 years after the termination of the Trusteeship agreement in 1986. The mandatory 25-year period will end in 2011.

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FLAME

From Page 1

Saipan, Sen. Joseph Mendiola said.

"We have to applaud Sako for taking such a bold action or risk to come to the CNMI," he said.

Rep. Rosemond Santos said she hopes Flame Sako understands the value of leasing land in the CNMI.

"I hope as a foreign investor you are privileged to do business here and you remember that," she said.

Under the lease, Flame Sako would pay DPL $52,320 for the first year. The amount would increase to $78,840 by the fifth year of the lease. The alternative would be to pay 3 percent of the gross receipts. After the initial five years, the company must pay based on a percentage of the fair market value. In the sixth year, the resort's owners must pay 4 percent of the fair market value or 3 percent of the gross receipts. By the end of the lease period, Flame Sako must pay 8 percent of the fair market value or 3 percent of the gross receipts-whichever is greater.

The 357-room resort covering 109,003 square meters will include hotel rooms, villas, a convention center, sea restaurant, water park, marine port and yacht basin.

Financial concerns

The decision to grant the lease did not come without considerable discussion, as members of the House and Senate spent nearly two hours questioning Public Lands Secretary John DelRosario and DPL legal counsel Braddock Huesman about the lease contract.

Rep. Heinz Hofschneider asked why Flame Sako's annual rental lease was set at 2 percent of the $2.616 million appraised value, while Kumho Asiana, which is building a $68-million "golftel" is leasing land at an annual rate of .6 percent of their $17 million appraisal.

"Why this disparity on appraisal between Kumho and Asiana?" the representative asked.

The important factor is whether DPL and the lessee agree on the terms, Rep. Victor Hocog said.

"If that's the case, I guess we can move ahead with the agenda today," he said. "I'm glad the companies agree and I would like to tell the secretary this is a better rental rate."

Afterward, Dae said he was not worried and believed he was getting a good deal.

Some members questioned if financing was available for Flame Sako to begin construction within six months after the lease is signed.

"It is my understanding that financial statements are due at the time of the application," Rep. Tina Sablan said.

"The chairman of Flame Sako has secured financing," DelRosario said.

When pressed for letters of credit or bank statements, the DPL secretary said Flame Sako has discussed financing with the bank and investors.

The resort's possible future use of a Qualifying Certificate was also a concern among some members. Committee members raised similar questions and were told they would not be asking for the tax credit, according to House Committee on Natural Resources chair Ramon Tetuteb. The House has passed a resolution asking the Commonwealth Development Authority to deny Kumho Asian's request for $22 million in tax rebates—$4 million more than the company was originally granted.

DEA

From Page 1

meetings with the governor and other agencies to get back the local officers pulled out from the task force last year.

Press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr. said Gov. Benigno R. Fitial strongly supports the partnership with DEA to continue addressing the drug trafficking problem in the CNMI.

"The CNMI still interested in reviving the joint-CNMI-DEA Task Force in the CNMI," he said. "However, the CNMI still needs to be sure that there will never be a repeat of the appalling incident that led to the unfortunate disruption of the Task Force. Certain conditions and assurances first have to be met. We need to be confident about our working relationship with the DEA."

The governor pulled out police and customs officers from the task force after local companies protested the DEA's actions that subjected passengers of a Shanghai Airlines flight to intensive body searches in October.

Since the pullout, the task force has had only two members: Holcomb and senior special agent Michael Byerley.

Besides lack of task force members, DEA also has issue with language barrier. In the Oct. 4 incident, for example, task force members were not able to properly communicate with the Chinese passengers searched because of language issues.

Holcomb said the meth problem in the CNMI is at an epidemic level "and it's been growing ever worse since 1995."

"The [meth] quantities here are big enough to destroy this community but small enough to conceal them almost anywhere and from enforcement standpoint, that's a great challenge," he told Chamber members.

DEA's current focus is targeting organized crime groups responsible for meth trafficking in the CNMI, and weeding out public corruption.

Holcomb said most meth are brought to the CNMI by Chinese organized crime groups, which are also doing "human trafficking, weapon smuggling and technology transfer to terrorist organizations."

He added that no meth laboratories have been found "yet" in the CNMI, unlike Guam where laboratories are operating. But the street cost of meth in Guam is higher than on Saipan. He said a gram of meth is sold for about $400 on Saipan.

The DEA earlier assured the CNMI government that it is looking into the alleged mistreatment of 147 Chinese tourists, who were made to go through a drug search upon arriving at Saipan International Airport in October.

BLEAK

From Page 1

have the luxury of time and the impasse will have a devastating impact on the islands and its people.

"Waiting 12 to 18 months in this depressed economy will [mean] further job losses, business closures, and an exodus of many resident and nonresidents seeking alternative places to work and care for their families," said Quinn in an e-mail interview.

'Shining star'

She said the exclusion of the Russia and China markets from the Guam-CNMI only visa waiver program will spell disaster for the local economy.

"The Russian market has been the 'shining star' in the midst of a global downtrend in tourism for the CNMI, as their high spending patterns reflect a positive influence on the local economy," she said.

Since 1996, PIC has continually worked to develop the Russian market through several visits to Russia for seminars, trade shows, sales calls, advertising, and promotional activities. PIC, Quinn said, has also incorporated the annual celebration of the festive Russian Orthodox Christmas and New Year parties in January 2003 and even hired 14 Russian staff and interns.

"The aggregate efforts and monies invested by PIC and other hotels, tour operators, and [the Marianas Visitors Authority] are reflected in the 23 percent market share that our hotel enjoys today," she said, adding that the loss of the Russian markets cannot simply be compensated by additional Japanese and Korean tourists, especially since flights are decreasing from the two countries.

Next month, Northwest will suspend its Osaka-Saipan flight while Asiana Airline's daily daytime flight will be reduced to four times weekly effective tomorrow, Feb. 6.

Quinn also believes that Asiana Airlines' considerable investment in the CNMI with their flights from Korea and Kansai and the Laolao Bay Golf Resort project will further be impacted by the decrease in Russian visitors, 95 percent of whom travel to Saipan via Seoul.

Quinn said the substantial time, money, and efforts devoted to cultivating the Russian market over six years will simply fizzle out once federalization takes effect.

Under the visa waiver program, competitive destinations like Thailand and Vietnam are benefiting from the "visa upon entry" system as Russian arrivals have grown by 150 percent over the last few years.

'$1.5M annual loss for Hyatt'

For Hyatt Regency Saipan general manager Nick K. Nishikawa, the loss of Russian guests will mean cutting 10 percent of the overall hotel revenue, which translates to about $1.5 million in annual loss.

Coupled with the threat of losing nonresident employees, Nikishawa said he cannot imagine operating the facility without the capable staff who continue to offer quality services to tourists and guests.

"We have about 130 contractual nonresident staffers who may lose their jobs. I don't think Saipan has enough local staff for our manpower needs. We should always remember that these tourists—Japanese, Russian, Koreans, and Chinese—they come back to the island not only because of the perfect views but they are also satisfied with how our hotel staff are serving them," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Nishikawa disclosed that over a hundred Russians are accommodated by Hyatt on a daily basis,.

This significant number, he said, spend and stay on island from 10 days to two weeks.

"Like other hotels, Russian guests are very important for us. Ten percent of the hotel revenue comes from the Russian market. Their usually long stay on island means a lot to every hotel. If we will lose them, Hyatt will be losing about $1.5 million annually," the manager said.

'Slow traffic for car rentals'

Car rental firms stationed at Francisco S. Ada-Saipan International Airport yesterday expressed "worry" over the effects of the federalization law that they say promises only "uncertainties" for CNMI businesses.

Citing their already slow operations, they believe that overall performance in the years ahead will be dim for the car rental industry.

Alamo National Car Rental's Mary Ann Deleon said their company is anticipating a significant "loss" once Russian tourists are barred from entering the CNMI.

"We're banking mostly on Japanese and Russian tourists," she told *Saipan Tribune*, describing their Russian records "a lot."

She, however, declined to give figures and estimates.

Although most Russians rent "bigger sized cars" like Mustangs and Expeditions, a staff of Avis Rent-a-Car said their company will also feel the effect of the markets' exclusion from the visa waiver program because they also have Chinese and Russian customers.

Other car rentals checked by *Saipan Tribune* yesterday were Toyota Rent-a-Car and Hertz Car Rental.

ANNUAL

From Page 1

This amount is equivalent to 35.2 percent of the annual tourism revenue of the CNMI, whose business gross revenue reached only $1.688 billion in 2009 based on the quarterly economic indicators report released yesterday by the Department of Commerce.

The year 2008 was the third time in the last five years that overall business income failed to reach the $2 billion mark.

"There is no doubt that 2009 will be a challenging year," Saipan Chamber of Commerce president Jim Arenovski told members of the business group in his report yesterday, referring to the visa waiver program's impact on the CNMI and the reduction of Northwest Airlines flights.

MVA, in a statement yesterday, said it is seeking the delayed implementation of the federal immigration regulations excluding visitors from China and Russia, which accounted for 20 percent of the CNMI's tourism revenue in fiscal year 2008.

Northwest Airlines will use smaller aircraft starting March 29—from the current 298-seater A330 to a 182-seater B757. Northwest will also cancel all its nighttime flights from both Osaka and Narita in May.

Arrivals from South Korea, the CNMI's second largest market, have been declining over the last several months.

"These changes are going to decimate the CNMI economy if seats can't be recovered. The CNMI will become a ghost town," MVA managing director Perry Tenorio said, referring to lost airline seats.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security issued regulations excluding China and Russia from the list of countries whose citizens are exempt from the visa requirement effective June 1—unless the implementation is delayed.

'More severe'

Despite the federal estimate of a $6 million negative impact on the CNMI, the Chamber's Arenovski said the impact will be much more severe.

"A sharp decrease in Russian and Chinese tourist arrivals will hurt hotels, airlines, tour agents, retail stores, and all of this will trickle down to many of our individual businesses, even if we're not directly in the tourism industry, and will certainly negatively impact government revenues," he said.

The U.S. DHS has yet to issue proposed regulations on the CNMI-only transitional worker program.

"We still need to see the new regulations on how to get these new visas, to determine if they are truly more difficult or expensive to obtain and detrimental to commerce on our islands," Arenovski said.

Lost revenue, lost jobs

Although visitors from China and Russia accounted for only 10 percent of total visitor arrivals, they contributed $56,790,108 in direct economic impact and $185,659,450 in indirect economic impact to the local economy due to longer stays and higher spending than other visitors, said MVA.

The CNMI also stands to lose 656 public sector jobs and 733 private sector jobs, if it loses visitors from China and Russia.

"The urgency of delaying the implementation of the regulations is further compounded by additional reductions in airlift from our main market of Japan," said Tenorio.

The China and Russia markets will become increasingly important in FY 2009 as Northwest has announced a series of service reductions in the coming months, including the use of smaller aircraft on March 29 followed by the cancellation of its nighttime flights from both Osaka and Narita in May.

Based on a 75 percent load factor and with an estimated $827 in direct and $2,709 in indirect economic impact per Japanese visitor, the CNMI will lose 26.8 percent of its total air seats by Northwest and $51,341,514 and $168,118,515 in direct and indirect economic opportunity, respectively, by the end of fiscal year 2009, the MVA chief said.

"The loss of the [Northwest] Osaka-Saipan flights means 20 percent fewer air seats from Japan. That's a tremendous loss from our major tourism market," Tenorio said.

Arrivals from Korea have been decreasing over the last several months due to the economic downturn in Korea and the weakened Korean won.

Mitigating the loss

MVA is meeting with its travel partners to look at ways to replace the loss of seats.

According to Tenorio, the new Osaka-Saipan flights by Asiana Airlines starting in December 2008 will help mitigate some of the loss.

Asiana Airlines is operating three times weekly for an anticipated six months using A321-200 aircraft, which provides 177 seats (12 business class seats and 165 economy class seats), or about 12,744 total seats for the operating period.

"Further assistance from our travel partners is desperately needed right now. However, given the fact that tourism is down worldwide, the timing could not be worse, and we are making a tremendous request," said Tenorio.

Justices affirm 30-year sentence of child sex abuser

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI Supreme Court has affirmed the conviction and sentence of a man who was ordered to spend 30 years in prison for sexually abusing an underaged girl.

The justices ruled that Juan B. Camacho's failure to submit a trial transcript as part of his excerpts of record both undermines his claims and hinders their ability to review the evidence presented at trial.

"Therefore, we will not disturb the trial court's findings as to the sufficiency of the evidence, the admittance of the handwritten notations on the desk calendar, or its denial of Camacho's motion for acquittal," said the high court opinion issued Tuesday by Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan and Associate Justices Alexandro C. Castro and John A. Manglona.

The justices determined that Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman did not err in imposing Camacho's prison sentence, "as it was not inhumane, cruel, or detrimental to the interest of justice."

In November 2006, Wiseman ordered the then 57-year-old Camacho to spend 30 years in jail for sexually abusing a then 12-year-old girl twice in 2004.

In September 2006, the jury found the defendant guilty on two counts of sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree. The jurors acquitted him on two count of kidnapping.

Wiseman also convicted Camacho on two counts of disturbing the peace.

Camacho, through lawyer Brien Sers Nicholas, asked that his sentence be reduced. Wiseman denied the motion.

Without the assistance of a lawyer, Camacho then filed a motion for habeas corpus. He moved to disqualify Wiseman from hearing the petition, He claimed that he was wrongly convicted and cruelly sentenced by a "kangaroo court." The defendant later requested to dismiss his petition.

In May 2008, Wiseman admonished Camacho for calling the court "kangaroo." The judge denied the motion for disqualification.

Camacho, through Nicholas, appealed to the CNMI Supreme Court. Then assistant attorney general Joseph L.G. Taijeron Jr. argued for the government.

Camacho argued that there is insufficient evidence of sexual penetration to support his conviction of sexual abuse of a minor.

The defendant also argued that Wiseman made a mistake in admitting the handwriting on the desk calendar. He claimed the notations on the calendar were irrelevant.

According to court records, the calendar on Camacho's desk contained a handwritten notation that stated he made love to the girl on July 12 and 13 in 2004.

On appeal, Camacho further argued that Wiseman improperly denied his motion for acquittal.

In addition, the defendant said the Commonwealth Code does not include a mandatory minimum eight-year sentence, and that the trial court's sentence should be set aside due to his age, physical handicap, and lack of criminal history.

With respect to the insufficiency of evidence issue, the justices said Camacho's failure to "present the entire transcript" made it "extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him to meet his burden of convincing this court…that the trier of fact lacked sufficient evidence to convict him."

Despite Camacho's failure to submit a trial transcript, the justices said it is important to note that even if they accepted his version of the evidence presented at trial as true, there is still sufficient evidence to support his convictions for sexual abuse of a minor.

"The jury found the girl's allegations to be credible, and Camacho presents no facts indicating that the girl's allegations are implausible. Thus, even if we accepted Camacho's version of the evidence presented at trial as true, there is still sufficient evidence to support his conviction for sexual abuse of a minor," the justices said.

On the handwritten notation issue, the justices said having failed to submit a trial transcript, Camacho failed to meet his burden of showing that Wiseman abused his discretion in admitting the handwritten notations on the calendar.

"We, therefore, must presume that sufficient evidence supports the trial court's authentication of the handwriting," they pointed out.

THIRD BIRTHDAY

"Happy 3rd birthday to our little princess, Betty Aquino Matson, who will be turning 3 years old today, Feb. 5. We love you very much. God bless you always!" Greetings come from your parents, Bill and Tess, sister Ciaralyn, and your grandparents Ted and Betty Matson.

Start of federalization 'likely' to be pushed back–DPL chief

By KRISTI EATON
kristi_eaton@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

New Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano is likely to delay the start of U.S. immigration law in the CNMI due to the pending litigation, Department of Public Lands Secretary John DelRosario told members of the Legislature yesterday.

DelRosario, while testifying before a joint House-Senate session about the proposed Flame Sako Resort, said Gov. Benigno Fitial has informed him that Napolitano is aware of the impact of Public Law 110-229, and that, from what he understands, she is "very likely" to implement a freeze in the law until the U.S. District Court makes a decision regarding the lawsuit.

The CNMI has sued the U.S. government in a bid to block the federal government from taking over local immigration on June 1. Lawyers for the CNMI have also filed a preliminary injunction suspending labor provisions of the law.

DelRosario said his understanding is that the freeze would take place because "it would be useless, from my understanding, to have this thing implemented and then the whole thing reverses if the court favors the CNMI lawsuit."

Eventually, DelRosario said, concerns of CNMI officials will be transmitted to the U.S. Congress and the Obama administration.

The Public Lands official made the comment when questioned by legislators about the composition of Flame Sako's employee pool. Under the Legislature-approved lease, at least 30 percent of Flame Sako employees must be local—10 percent more than mandated by law.

Even if federalization does occur, DelRosario told the House and Senate members that the company could still hire temporary workers to fill the positions.

The CNMI and United States governments are still actively involved in the litigation.

Earlier this week both parties requested a date be set so oral arguments could be heard.

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Local farmers eye supplying Japan, US military in Guam

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Local farmers and ranchers are looking at the possibility of supplying vegetables, fruits and other products to Japan and the U.S. military in Guam to help boost the CNMI economy.

Ramon B. Camacho, vice chairman of the Saipan Municipal Council and a member of the newly created Farmers Support Group, said a key step is forming a local farmers' cooperative that will "facilitate" the marketing of the CNMI as a major supplier of produce to the U.S. military and Japan.

"We have lots of potential vendors here," Camacho said yesterday during a press conference in the Governor's Conference Room on Capital Hill about the first Agricultural Summit on Feb. 11 and 12 at the Saipan World Resort.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and other government officials said that during tough economic times, the CNMI agriculture industry can still make progress because of the inherent demand for fresh food and agricultural products and by developing new markets for these products.

"For instance, local ranchers and farmers may prosper in the future by supplying products to the U.S. military during the regional buildup over the next several years," he said.

Farming and ranching are generally not as large and as profitable as tourism but the CNMI can still have a more viable farming and ranching industries and be a more self-sufficient community, the governor added.

Camacho also said fresh produce that are produced locally help community members live a healthier lifestyle.

"The CNMI and federal government are spending millions of dollars in diabetes prevention so let's educate our people that we have fresh produce available here," he said.

Fitial and Camacho called on the community to support and help the development of the local farming and ranching industry. They also asked local farmers and ranchers to establish a business network and learn more about marketing and running successful enterprises.

"This is where the Farmers Support Group comes into the picture," said Fitial, referring to the group that consists of members from Northern Marianas College, the Department of Lands and Natural Resources and the Saipan Municipal Council.

Camacho said businessman Tony Pellerino, whose business has already been supplying shrimp to the U.S. military and Vietnam, is encouraging him to visit the Guam military base to get more information on how to become a supplier of local produce.

The Farmers Support Group helps tackle the challenges of the agricultural industry and helps make their businesses a more viable and profitable industry for the CNMI. To support this effort, the group is holding the first Agricultural Summit on Feb. 11 and 12.

Fitial, Camacho, DLNR secretary Dr. Ike dela Cruz, NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez and other officials yesterday called on farmers, ranchers, local and federal regulatory agencies, businesses and individuals to attend the two-day summit.

Isolated power outages Tuesday and yesterday

Failing distribution hardware caused a two-hour power outage Tuesday, according to the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

Due to years of corrosion and exposure, a pole top pin within Kiya-4 failed, automatically tripping the feeder. Because of the loss of power, feeders 4 and 7, and Kiya 2 were also affected.

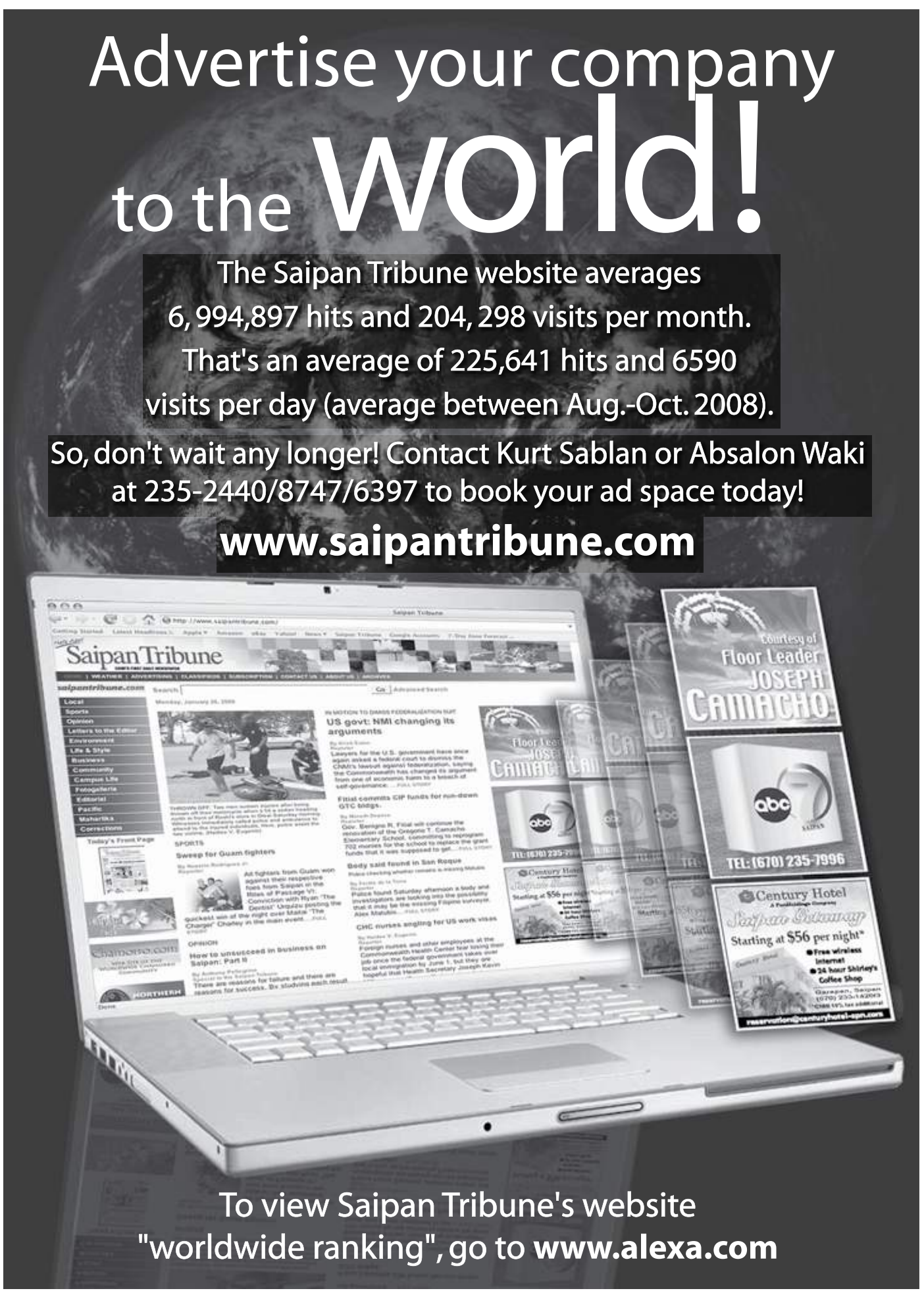
The outage started at 8:38pm and by 10:40pm everything was up and running, CUC said.

Also, moisture entered a high voltage short gear yesterday at Kiya-1, causing a 45-minute outage. While the feeder could be restored, line crews were not able to repair an underground cable until 5 pm.

CUC executive director Antonio Muna has said transmission equipment is the main reason for power outages now.

Some of the hardware that is supposed to isolate areas when an outage occurs is old and exposed to the elements, therefore not working properly, Muna said.

Muna said CUC has ordered its annual parts inventory, totaling around half a million dollars. Within that half million should be components to help with the transmission and distribution problems, he said. ***(Kristi Eaton)***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Worker sues ex-Rota senator

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An alien worker has sued former Rota senator Edward U. Maratita Sr. for allegedly refusing to pay her $5,157.59 in back wages pursuant to a settlement agreement in a labor case.

Annie Blaza sued Edward Maratita and Dominic C. Maratita for breach of contract.

Blaza, who filed the case without the assistance of a lawyer, asked the Superior Court to order the Maratitas to pay her the remaining back wages, plus fees and court costs.

Blaza was among four employees of Bay Breeze Restaurant on Rota who filed a labor case against the establishment's owners, the Maratitas.

Blaza stated that that on Feb. 12, 2008, Labor accepted their settlement agreement, stating that plaintiff's due back wages amount to $5,877.59.

She said the Maratitas paid her $720 on Aug. 16, 2008.

"Despite the repeated follow-up to the defendants, no payment has been received by the plaintiff," the worker said.

Blaza said that, as of Jan. 22, 2009, defendants have an outstanding balance of back wages owed her in the amount of $5,157.59.

Edward Maratita, a Republican, served as Rota senator from 1990 to 1994 and from 1998 to 2002.

Free Energy Star light bulbs will be given away on Rota

The Department of Public Works' Energy Division will be on Rota this Friday, Feb. 6, 2009, and Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009, to give away two free compact fluorescent light bulbs to the island's residents.

This promotion is available to all residential paying customers of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. Consumers must provide a copy of their CUC utility bill to receive two free CFLs per customer.

CONTACT INFO
Energy Division: 664-4480/1
www.energystar.gov/change the world

The CFL distribution is part of the "Energy Star" Awareness Project and the Northern Mariana Islands' participation in the "Change the World, Start with 'Energy Star'" national campaign.

The event will be at the Rota Round House from 9am to 4pm on Friday and from 9am to 12pm on Saturday.

The DPW Energy Division will also be providing information about CNMI vendors offering products or services involving energy conservation and alternative, renewable energy.

ACE Hardware will be on site displaying their products, including their "buy one, get one" free promotion on the CFLs and the Energy Star Elastomeric Roof Coating. For every CFL purchased from ACE, Energy Division will provide one free with a limit of 6 pieces per customer and if you purchase an Elastomeric primer, you will get a free coating (limit 1 per household). This promotion is extended to residential homeowners only and not for businesses.

For more information about the free CFLs, you may call the Energy Division at 664-4480/1. If you need more information about Energy Star, visit the website at www.energystar.gov/change the world.

This project is made possible through a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, State Energy Program. ***(PR)***

'Graffiti problem now uncontrollable'

DPS steps up operation to catch vandals

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorrre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Describing the graffiti problem on Saipan "uncontrollable," the Department of Public Safety has stepped up its operation against vandals, particularly the ones responsible for spray-painting the word "xenocide."

DPS noted that graffiti are now rampant in bus stops, library, private and government buildings, parks, and even in parked vehicles.

In a press conference yesterday, DPS Criminal Investigation Bureau's Juvenile Investigator Vincent Mareham said the graffiti problem is getting very serious so they need to step up and arrest these vandals.

Mareham disclosed that on Sunday night, patrol officers arrested one of three male juveniles who spray-painted the public restroom at the Susupe Beach Park.

The investigator said two other male juveniles managed to run away from the pursuing officers.

The restroom had just been painted as part of a cleanup program conducted by Tan Holdings' officials, employees and their family members.

As for the "xenocide problem," Mareham said they have some good leads on the person or persons responsible for this. He said he could not go into details because they are currently working on leads.

"If you look at xenocide, 'xeno' means foreigners, 'cide' means killings. Killing of foreigners. That is disturbing!" Mareham said.

He believes that the public should help DPS arrest the xenocide vandal or vandals because it is instilling fear, especially in the tourism industry.

"People won't come here to do business if they see these signs," Mareham said. "That's why we are asking public's help if they see or have knowledge about these vandals to call DPS, Crime Stoppers or the Criminal Investigation Bureau."

Mareham said patrol officers are now intensifying their patrols, particularly in dark areas in public places and parks.

DPS spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said most graffiti are done by minors.

"We encourage the families, parents in general, to ensure that their children are not vandals and they know where their children are going and what they do," Ogumoro said.

She urged the public to provide them information in order to assist investigators in developing cases against these vandals.

Ogumoro reminded the vandals that they are not only destroying property and premises of business owners and the government, but they are also taking a risk if they are caught.

If convicted, these people will face felony or misdemeanor charges and there will be jail time and severe fines, as well as restitution.

Ogumoro said the penalty ranges from five to 10 years in prison and a $500 fine or more.

Island mathletes to face off in Saturday contest

Middle school mathletes from Saipan, Tinian and Rota will compete in the 15th Annual Chapter Competition of the national Mathcounts program on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009, at the Multi-Purpose Center, in Susupe from 8am to 12pm. The competition is being organized by EFC Engineers and Architects Corp.

A total of 14 schools and approximately 150 students will compete. Schools represented are Calvary Christian Academy, Dandan Elementary School, Eucon International School, Eskuelan San Francisco De Borja, Grace Christian Academy-Saipan, Hopwood Jr. High School, Marianas Baptist Academy, Mount Carmel School, Rota Jr. High School, Saipan Community School, Saipan International School, Tinian Elementary School, Tinian Jr. High, and Whispering Palms School.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Calvary Christian Academy
Chacha Ocean View Jr. High
Eucon International School
Eskuelan San Francisco De Borja
GTC Elementary School
Grace Christian Academy – Saipan
Grace Christian Academy – Rota
Hopwood Jr. High School
Marianas Baptist Academy
Mount Carmel School
Rota Jr. High School
Saipan Community School
Saipan International School
Tinian Elementary School
Whispering Palms

Teachers and students have been preparing for the competition since last September. Students will compete individually and as teams in written and fast-paced oral matches. Subjects include algebra, probability, statistics and geometry. Winners will receive trophies, and will advance to the State Mathcounts finals, to be held on March 7, 2009. The top four winners of the State competition will earn a trip to the National Competition, which is being held at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort in Orlando, Florida on May 8, 2009.

Mathcounts is a national program designed to improve math skills among U.S. students. The program focuses on middle school students, who are at a crucial stage in developing and sustaining math interest and ability.

Local sponsors for previous years include Bridge Capital LLC, Chongs Corp., Deloitte & Touche, DFS Saipan, EFC Engineers & Architects Corp., National Office Supply, Subway Investments, Transamerica Corp., UMDA, and Winzler and Kelly.

Mathcounts' national sponsors are Raytheon Company, Northrop Grumman Foundation, National Society of Professional Engineers, CAN Foundation, Conoco Phillips, General Motors Foundation, Lockheed Martin, 3M Foundation, and Texas Instruments Inc. ***(PR)***

EMO projects rough seas until this Friday

Large north swells will produce hazardous surf in the Marianas through Thursday and surf will be especially dangerous along north facing exposures.

Based on information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam and compiled by the local Emergency Management Office, dangerous surf of 13 to 15 feet were expected along north facing exposures yesterday, falling to 12 to 14 feet last night and 10 to 12 feet today, Thursday. Minor coastal flooding of around 1 foot was possible near the time of high tide yesterday afternoon.

EMO said a high surf advisory remains in effect from 6pm last night to 6am Friday along north facing and west facing reefs.

The public is urged to stay away from exposed reefs and beaches, especially those facing north as rip currents will be life threatening.

In Guam, north facing exposures include Ypao, Ritidian, and Tarague beaches. On Rota, north facing exposures include Teteto Beach. On Saipan, north facing exposures include Achugau Beach. ***(EMO)***

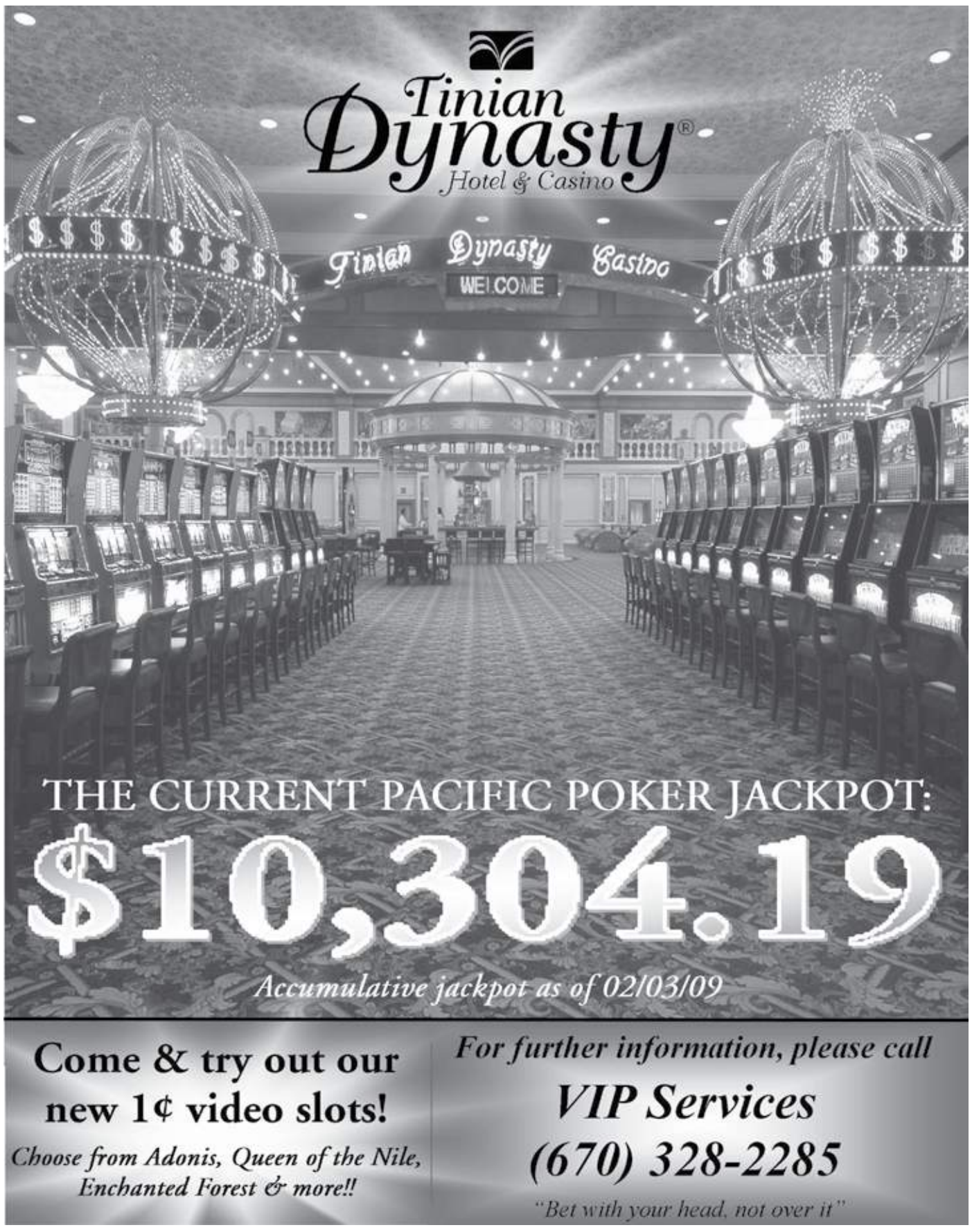
Red flag up at Rota beach

The Division of Environment Quality has raised the red flag on a Rota beach adjacent to the Coral Garden and is warning the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of this location for the next 48 hours or until notified.

DEQ said that samples collected from the site were found to contain excessive concentrations of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water. However, studies have shown that storm water runoff in tropical environments may also contain these bacteria from the natural environment, which may not be directly associated with public health concerns.

This week, DEQ analyzed samples of marine recreational and storm drainage water from 12 locations on Rota. Marine Water Quality Reports are also provided at www.deq.gov.mp/section.aspz?secID=4 and http://www.cnmicoralreef.net/wq/beachcloseweeklyresults.htm. Interested individuals and organizations may also receive e-mail notifications of the weekly marine water quality reports. To do so, send an e-mail to environment@deq.gov.mp.

For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. ***(DEQ)***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Palacios named to RNC Transition Team

Bo Palacios, the current Republican National Committeeman from the Northern Mariana Islands, has been named co-chairman of the RNC Transition Team, which will review all party operations and begin preparing for this year's elections.

Palacios is currently the Corporate Project Manager at Joeten Enterprises Inc. and is the youngest member of the Republican National Committee at 24.

Palacios' appointment was part of an announcement made yesterday by the newly elected chairman of the Republican National Committee, Michael Steele.

Composed of current RNC members, the transition team will help implement the sweeping changes Steele proposed during his campaign for chairman. Under Steele's leadership, the RNC will focus on recruiting a new cadre of top-notch candidates and operatives, build new volunteer networks, and forge new working relationships with state and local parties. The team will also immediately begin preparing for the gubernatorial and local elections later this year in Virginia, New Jersey, the Northern Mariana Islands and the special congressional election in New York State.

"We're going to bring this party to every corner of the country and ask people to join us and work with us," Steele said. "By standing on our principles—we can expand and grow. My transition team will take a fresh look at everything with an eye toward preparing to win the campaigns of the future."

The chairman's transition team will be led by Reince Priebus, chairman of the Republican Party of Wisconsin, member of the RNC's Executive Committee, and one of the young leaders who will help expand the Grand Old Party.

"Michael is committed to our conservative cause, has strong leadership skills, and the ability to connect with and energize our grassroots supporters," Priebus said. "Our core fundamental principles remain strong and mirror those of the majority of Americans. We must improve our outreach efforts in order to grow as a Party. I look forward to continuing my partnership with him and the RNC."

Besides Palacios, the other co-chairmen of the Steele Transition Team include:

■ Saul Anuzis, the current chairman of the Michigan Republican Party. Anuzis founded the telecommunications firm Quick Connect USA, is a leader in the use of technology in political campaigns, and an active blogger.

■ Henry Barbour, the current National Committeeman from Mississippi. Barbour has served as the campaign manager for Chip Pickering and Haley Barbour, the current Governor of Mississippi and former RNC Chairman.

■ Pat Brady, the current National Committeeman from Illinois. He is an attorney and originally from St. Charles, IL. Brady previously worked as a federal prosecutor in California and in the Cook County State's Attorney's office.

■ Jim Greer, the current Chairman of the Republican Party of Florida. Prior to his expanded work for the Republican Party in Florida, Greer was the Acting President & CEO of Regulatory Compliance Services, Inc. and J. Greer & Associates.

■ Holly Hughes, the current National Committeewoman from Michigan. Hughes is a small business owner and a former Montague Area Public School Board member.

■ Shawn Steel, the current National Committeeman from California. From 2001-2003, Steel served the California Republican Party as Chairman. He is also the founding director of the California chapter of the Club for Growth.

■ Joyce Tehres, the current National Committeewoman from Maryland. From 1989-1998, Tehres served as Chair of the Maryland Republican Party.

■ Bob Tiernan, the current Chairman of the Republican Party of Oregon. Tiernan is a business consultant from Lake Oswego and a former state representative. ***(RNC)***

CRIME OF THE WEEK

Stolen firearm

Crime Stoppers is seeking the community's assistance for information on any person(s) involved in the theft of a .22 caliber Ruger rifle 10/22 model long rifle. According to preliminary investigation, the theft incident was reported on Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2009, at 7:14pm at the residence of Anthony C. Leon Guerrero in Chalan Kiya. Police learned that the firearm was last seen in Leon Guerrero's bedroom three days prior to the reported incident. Crime Stoppers would like to inform the community that they can call Crime Stoppers if they wish to provide details of cases involving other stolen firearms.

Anyone having information about these crimes, please call the Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. Crime Stoppers pays cash rewards up to $1,000 for information leading to an arrest. Caller ID is not used. All calls remain anonymous. ***(NMI Crime Stoppers)***

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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 5, 2001

NMC gains 6-year accreditation

The Northern Marianas College has gained a new and vital edge against its educational counterparts in the Pacific with its six-year reaffirmation as a fully-accredited community college granted by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The WASC Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges decided to approve NMC's six-year accreditation application, after a thorough review and deliberation of the institution's Self Study and results of the three-day accreditation visit last October 2000. CNMI's lone postsecondary institution has always managed to obtain the maximum level of accreditation since 1985, when it initiated efforts to tap expert assistance to objectively assess the institution's programs and services.

Use of water in 7 areas halted

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation yesterday advised residents of seven areas in Southern Saipan to stop consuming water from Isley and Obyan well fields until official results of jet fuel spillage investigation are released. In compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, CUC officials advised residents of Chalan Kanoa, Susupe, San Jose, Chalan Laulau, As Perdido, and airport area should not consume water from their faucets as a result of the jet fuel leakage incident two weeks ago. Corporate Communication Special Advisor Pamela Mathis said Commonwealth Ports Authority and Mobil Oil officials have already tapped services of an independent consultant to sample the wells once a week.

February 5, 2002

'Not a Super Bowl holiday'

School was out for public senior and junior high students yesterday to make way for what the Public School System dubbed as Professional Development Day for its teachers and staff. Though some criticized the one-day school timeout as just an excuse to tune in on the nation's most awaited football event-The Super Bowl-Education Commissioner Dr. Rita H. Inos explained that the PSS' school calendar has set the date aside for purposes of staff development. The State Board of Education even gave the PSS administration its stamp of approval to hold the Professional Development Day yesterday, according to Inos. Previously, the Professional Development Day was reportedly scheduled for January 28, 2002 but schools decided to hold classes that day. The date was reset to Feb. 4.

AG: Asylum applies to NMI

The asylum provisions of the United Nations Convention on Refugees-to which the United States is a signatory-applies to its territories, including the Commonwealth. In line with this, the Babauta administration intends to pursue a policy that accomplishes the obligation of carrying out the provisions of the Convention that would meet both United States and CNMI obligations, as set forth in the Covenant. In an interview with reporters, Attorney General Robert Torres said the Covenant itself clearly lays out the standards by which the asylum issue is to be considered.

February 5, 2003

$2M to be infused to BoS

Bank of Saipan receiver Antonio S. Muna yesterday said at least $2 million in capital contribution would be infused to the bank as soon as the court approves the rehabilitation plan for the beleaguered financial institution. At the same time, Muna argued that Douglas Montgomery bought his stocks from the bank-not from JLH Pacific Trust and the Calvo shareholders-insisting that no stock transfer took place since Montgomery did not pay anything to BoS. "Once the rehabilitation plan is approved, it [capital contribution] is going to be immediate," Muna said. The receiver urged all parties in the bank's receivership case to quickly review the plan so that modifications they feel necessary would be incorporated should the court approve the bank's reorganization. A hearing on the approval of the rehabilitation plan is scheduled at the Superior Court on February 12.

Spending control measures out soon

The Babauta administration is getting ready to present to the Legislature a string of recommendations envisioned to place the Commonwealth government's finances in order amid the serious cash flow shortage. Gov. Juan N. Babauta disclosed yesterday that the presentation will center on revenue enhancement, expenditure control and other measures to stimulate the local economy. The Legislature will be given a preview of the recommendations sometime this week or next week, according to the local chief executive.

JOETEN 60th ANNIVERSARY

Joeten's Best Buys of the Week!

February 5, thru February 11, 2009

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Living Home 16" Stand Fan
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Living Home 16" Wall Mount Fan
$36.99

Living Home 12" Desk Fan
$22.99

Kingsford Charcoal Sure Fire 18lbs.
$11.35

Kingsford Charcoal Orig. 21lb
$11.35

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HAFA-ADAI SHOPPING CENTER TEL.: 234-7596 MON. THRU SUN. 8:00A.M. - 11:00P.M.

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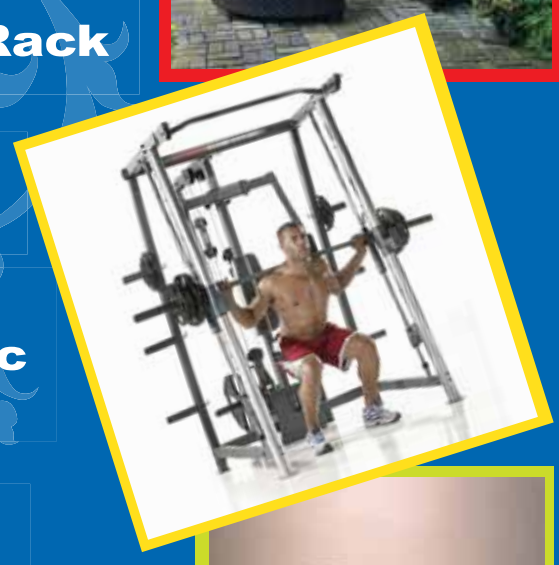

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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THE ACUPUNCTURIST

EDITORIAL

Fertility ethics

The mother of the new octuplets reportedly would like to use her fame to get a stint as a TV child-rearing expert. It's hard to imagine seeking parenting advice from someone who, with no real financial stability and no father for her six other children, would nonetheless use the most extreme form of infertility treatment to bear eight more.

Not that there aren't important questions to be raised, but they should be brought up by medical authorities and asked of the doctor or doctors who performed the serial in vitro procedures described by the babies' grandmother. Did they do a psychological evaluation of a woman who wanted to get pregnant again after having six children in rapid succession, the oldest of whom is 7? (Fewer than one in five fertility specialists do, a study found.) Why were eight embryos implanted in this instance, when the standard calls for far fewer? Wasn't that especially important considering the extra medical risks involved if the mother would not consider a selective abortion?

Fertility treatment has brought joy to many, but there also have been abuses. In a 1990s case, University of California, Irvine fertility doctors stole women's embryos and implanted them in other women. In 2006, a Los Angeles doctor was duped by a 67-year-old woman who had a baby with his help; she told him she was 53, two years younger than his cutoff age for fertility treatment.

Society must guard against judging who is allowed to have children. A doctor cannot refuse to provide fertility treatment to a lesbian, as the state Supreme Court rightly ruled, because of his own moral objections. Nor is marital status or wealth a fair criterion for calculating someone's fitness to be a parent; nor, for that matter, how many children they want to have, as long as they can provide the necessary care. The rearing of children is a personal decision, unless there is mistreatment.

That's different from the medical considerations that should have played a part in the octuplets case. Doctors have an obligation to weigh the health risks to both mother and child—and those are considerable with so-called high-multiple births. The guidelines set down by medical organizations affect whether insurance will cover a procedure, but carry little force otherwise. Clearly, the field of fertility treatment needs more than guidelines.

The mother of the octuplets might get magazine deals and free diapers—or perhaps not. The revelations about her have resulted in more derision than delight. She and her family will live with the consequences, happy or not. That's their business. Curbing the potential for medical abuse, though, is a matter of public concern.

(c) 2009, Los Angeles Times

What happens to retiree's life, medical insurance program if the Fund goes broke?

By WILLIAM H. STEWART
Special to the Saipan Tribune

William H. Stewart is an economist, historian, and military cartographer.

If you are a member of the Retirement Fund and have been reading and hearing about the dire condition of the Fund's future financial stability and the very real possibility of it becoming bankrupt in a few years, then you should already be aware of the future effect on your pension. But there are other related difficulties many members will face that hasn't been given too much attention.

These serious consequences concern two programs in which many members participate, namely, group medical and health insurance and life insurance, both of which could also be closed down along with pension payments.

Group health and life insurance plans have been sponsored by the government and made available to retirees while recipients of surviving spouse benefits may enroll only in the health insurance plan. Of course, they may enroll in any private plan of their choice assuming the private company will accept them at premiums they can afford to pay.

Retirees should be concerned as to what will happen to the member's Group Life Insurance coverage when the Retirement Fund goes broke in a few years as many (including myself) believe will occur.

Members who have paid insurance premiums for years will lose coverage unless there is an alternate method for making premium payments other than by way of payroll deductions, which will no longer be possible with a bankrupt Retirement Fund.

The same is true of the present medical and health insurance coverage.

Considering that coverage for both life and medical insurance will probably not be transferable to just any firm of one's choice or preference—and considering that the years of previous payments will count for nothing when new coverage is arranged by the individual member—I further doubt if any firm with experience will except government issued IOU's as a promise for future payment even if presumably backed by the full faith and credit of the NMI.

Most people are aware that group coverage is quite a bit less expensive than that arranged by individuals and, in the case of life insurance, the government has been paying half of the cost of a retiree's insurance premium so one can expect that program will be dropped and the cost of individually purchased life insurance will be more than double what it is now with even much less coverage for the price.

With respect to medical and health insurance—as is always true—the matter of pre-existing illnesses becomes a factor in applying for coverage. This is particularly true for those with existing conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, a heart condition, ulcers, tuberculosis, epilepsy, emphysema, kidney problems, cancer, high cholesterol, (LDL), glaucoma, HIV, Lupus Vulgaris, Lytigo and Bodig, Alzheimer's, Parkinson, Hansen or any one of the numerous unseen ravenous vultures of the air and body that can strike one down with little warning and otherwise be deemed prohibited from medical or life insurance coverage. Seems to me there might be a whole lot of people with one or more of the above conditions.

When the Fund runs out of money to pay pensions those retired government employees who did not have the option of contributing to the national Social Security "safety net" will either be without income or they will need to rely on other sources—but most will probably suffer by experiencing much reduced income. This occurring at a time when inflation will likely be rampant and more severe as the future unfolds.

Section 606 of the Covenant addressed the application of the U.S. Social Security system to the NMI but the government elected to opt out in favor of its own retirement plan. For those who haven't paid into Social Security, such people will not be eligible for monthly pension payments.

This is not to state that the Social Security System does not apply in the NMI. It certainly does for many in the private sector.

Because the NMI government decided not to participate in the U.S. Social Security system and instead formed its own retirement system, Commonwealth retirees are now particularly vulnerable if conditions in their own retirement program aren't straightened out—and soon. Under it's own system, CNMI financial contributions that should have been made to the employee's retirement program by the central government—but haven't been—does not bode well for the long-term interests of current retirees as well as those

See WHAT on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Bringing the crowds to Saipan

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC (www.bizresults.org). They can be contacted at biz_results@yahoo.com.

Last week we shared some ideas that could bring more tourists to Saipan. A CEO of a California-based company picked one of the suggestions from last week's article on the Internet, and talks are going on right now to explore the idea's potential.

This was just one of a couple of dozen ideas that were shared at a recent brainstorming session. Implementing just a few of the ideas could add several thousand more visitors to our islands, start a major turnaround for our dwindling tourist numbers, and be the answer we desperately need to bring better times to the CNMI.

At the same meeting, we took what was collectively considered the top concept (having a convention center) and explored next action steps and ideas that could help make it become a reality. If we had a convention center that could handle hundreds or even thousands of people, then it would help attract corporate event planners, clubs, associations, and regular tourists to visit the islands. Combined with our perennially warm weather, short flight time from Asian countries, and excellent golf courses, Saipan would easily inch its way up the priority list of locations to hold a convention.

Below are some of the ideas concerning a convention center, in no particular order:

■ Have business expos and tradeshows.

■ Have a one-stop business mall and support center inside the convention center.

■ Have translators available during the convention.

■ Invite top business speakers to speak at the convention center to attract international businesspeople.

■ Have local foods available and expose the visitors to local culture.

■ Have a spelling bee contest for international students to gather at a central location in the Pacific Rim.

■ Facilitate and foster the Korean group already interested in building a convention center.

■ Hold beauty pageants for international beauties.

■ Have popular Asian stars perform at the convention center to attract more tourists.

■ Relax Article 12 and other laws to encourage investors (have specified commercial zones where investors can purchase property to build the convention center.

■ Legalize casino gambling to attract investors.

■ Get permission to build on the land in American Memorial Park and get federal funds [convince the feds that this is needed to offset the impact on tourism from the federalization of immigration].

■ Renovate the dilapidated La Fiesta Mall to include a large convention center.

■ Get hotels and other businesses that would benefit most to invest in the convention center.

■ Have regional contests such as automotive engine rebuilding.

■ Get a national airline to fly people to the CNMI and subsidize junkets.

■ Invite people and organizations in the convention center business to explore the possibility on Saipan, and encourage them to build here.

■ Have athletic events and clinics that can be held seasonally, such as golf promotions, basketball clinics, mixed martial arts and boxing.

■ Promote golf courses as world-class standard courses for people who come for business but also want to golf.

■ Hold LPGA professional golf tournaments.

Many of these ideas could be combined so that events are held throughout the year. We only have a few venues that allow larger groups of people to gather together, and they are relatively small when compared to other locations with a convention center. In addition to conventions for off island visitors, the center could be the hub of many activities, such as graduations and community events because it would provide a large meeting area. It would stimulate other business opportunities and increase government revenue.

We are losing untold millions of dollars each year because we are bypassed by thousands of conventioneers, without even realizing it. We recently learned from a reliable source that a major tradeshow organizer was seriously considering Saipan to host a large 570-person tour convention from Korea. However, because we don't have a venue large enough to handle the stage, displays, and other amenities required by the group, we lost out. With a convention center, we could capitalize on a percentage of the millions of people who spend big dollars at conventions and other events…or we can sit around and just keep complaining about tough times.

Reviewing the regulations, and why it matters

By NICHOLAS GOLDBERG
(c) 2009, Los Angeles Times

Goldberg is the deputy editor of the Times' editorial pages.

When President Barack Obama nominated liberal Harvard law professor Cass R. Sunstein to head a little-known department called the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, it hardly seemed like a risky choice. But in the weeks since, the decision has unleashed a torrent of discussion about the arcane concept of "cost-benefit analysis," a subject not often mentioned outside the province of economists and government regulators.

What is cost-benefit analysis and why do we care?

Let's start with the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. Since the Reagan administration, this little agency has been entrusted with a big mission: reviewing all proposed government regulations before they go into effect. Those regulations (and there are thousands to be considered every year) involve everything from airline safety to public health to environmental protection to workplace rules, plus any of a million other subjects.

Each new administration must decide how it will go about judging such regulations. What's the best way to separate the good ones from the bad ones, the effective ones from the ineffective ones?

Sunstein is a respected public intellectual and an unabashed liberal. But it turns out that he has one little problem on his liberal resume: He's a proponent of judging new and proposed regulations by weighing what they will cost to impose against the benefits they will reap. And that, in a nutshell, is cost-benefit analysis.

Isn't that just common sense?

Its supporters say so. But critics say cost-benefit analysis is a sham—a rigged, pseudoscientific process (created by Republicans and their allies in the business world) that almost always seems to favor doing less rather than more. They say that in the hands of people such as John Graham, the first OIRA chief of the George W. Bush administration, cost-benefit analysis has been used to ensure that needed health and safety regulations are rejected as too costly.

What's an example of cost-benefit analysis at work?

Consider the Environmental Protection Agency's regulation of arsenic in the drinking water, which is an example Sunstein used in an article several years ago. Should the allowable level be set at 20 parts per billion, at 10 ppb or at 3 ppb? Keep in mind that, as the regulation becomes more stringent, it becomes more effective in protecting people—but it also becomes increasingly expensive, dramatically driving up consumers' annual water bills.

In the example posed by Sunstein, reducing the allowable level of arsenic by that final margin—from 10 ppb to 3 ppb—saves only five more lives. Is that worth it? If it costs $1 million to do so, you might decide it is. But, on the other hand, if it costs $1 billion or $10 billion, you might decide that it's not. That's the calculation that has to be made: How much are we willing to spend to save those five lives?

How can you calculate such a thing? Isn't the value of human life incalculable?

That's one of the chief complaints of liberal critics about cost-benefit analysis: It requires setting dollar values on things that are simply not measurable—such as human life or, say, pristine wilderness. According to Frank Ackerman and Lisa Heinzerling, authors of a book on the subject called "Priceless," the Environmental Protection Agency in 2000 valued a life at $6.1 million as part of its analysis of arsenic in the drinking water. The agency settled on that seemingly arbitrary number after a study of how much American workers demanded in wage increases to face annual accident risks. Ackerman and Heinzerling ridiculed this approach, arguing that the value of life is immeasurable and that deaths are not mere "costs" that can be calculated by statisticians.

That does sound kind of creepy. How does Sunstein defend it?

"Of course it is difficult and uncomfortable to assign monetary values to human lives or to risks of death," Sunstein has acknowledged. "Many people find the very idea preposterous. But whenever government decides how much to reduce risks, it is implicitly assigning such values. ... Any regulator will acknowledge that at some point, the cost of additional risk reduction is just too high. Why not be honest about that?"

That's hard to argue with. Any time a politician chooses to pay for, say, homeland security instead of health care, or decides to allocate $1 million rather than $10 million for traffic safety, he or she is making a similar decision. Cost-benefit analysis merely tries to make that process logical and coherent rather than instinctual and emotional—to give policymakers a tool to make the most effective choices about how to allocate scarce resources. Sunstein argues that our current regulation structure is irrational; we often pay large sums to fight small risks while simultaneously paying small sums to fight large risks.

What's the "senior death discount" that has gotten Sunstein in trouble?

Sunstein has argued that in judging the benefits of a regulation, it is important to figure out not just how many lives it saves but how many "life years" it saves. "Other things being equal," Sunstein says, "a program that protects young people seems far better than one that protects old people, because it delivers far greater benefits."

This line of thinking drives many people crazy. They find it inequitable, inherently unjust to seniors, heartless. But many economists and actuaries think this way. And perhaps we all do to some degree. ?

Is there an alternative way to assess regulations rather than cost-benefit analysis?

Some liberals prefer an approach popular in Europe known as the "precautionary principle." This theory allows for aggressive regulation even in the face of scientific uncertainty if something is thought to pose a potential harm; it shifts the burden of proof to those who would stand in the way of regulatory protections and takes the focus off dollars and cents. Sunstein is not a proponent.

So is Sunstein totally in line with the Reagan-era bureaucrats who first lent credence to cost-benefit analysis?

Not at all. Sunstein acknowledges many of the liberal critiques of cost-benefit analysis. For instance, he believes that regulators should take account of all potential benefits, such as protection of ecosystems and animals. He agrees that it is "crude" to say that a life is worth $6.1 million, and that the calculation of such numbers has been simplistic. Most significantly, he is a supporter of a strong regulatory state.

"We cannot rely entirely on cost-benefit analysis," he concludes, "but we will do a lot better, morally as well as practically, with it than without it."

WHAT

From Page 10

still working and not yet retired.

So when the Fund runs out of money after having cashed in its investments to pay pensions, look for the group medical and life insurance programs to be negatively impacted as well.

I can see where the matter can become a big problem for some people without medical coverage and eventually a problem for CHC—and by extension the U.S. taxpayer.

The Federal Insurance Contribution Act tax (FICA), more commonly referred to as "Social Security," is paid by both employer and employee on gross income in the amount of 6.2 percent respectively for a total of 12.4 percent. Added to this is the Medicare portion (health and medical coverage) where both the employee and employer each pay an additional 1.45 percent respectively on gross income for a total contribution of 2.9 percent. The total payment for both in 2008 equaled 15.3 percent.

I presume those government employees who do not participate in the Fund's defined benefit plan or the Fund's group health and medical insurance plan as well as those who are managing their own retirement in a defined contribution plan are aware of the government's matching FICA contribution.

Editor's note: For more information as to why many retirees do not have Medicare coverage see the Saipan Tribune *Archives dated Oct. 27 and 28, 2008, for the article* No Social Security 'Safety Net' for Many Govt. Retirees As The Legislature 'Opted Out' of the U.S. System In Favor of NMI's Retirement Fund, (Two Parts).

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

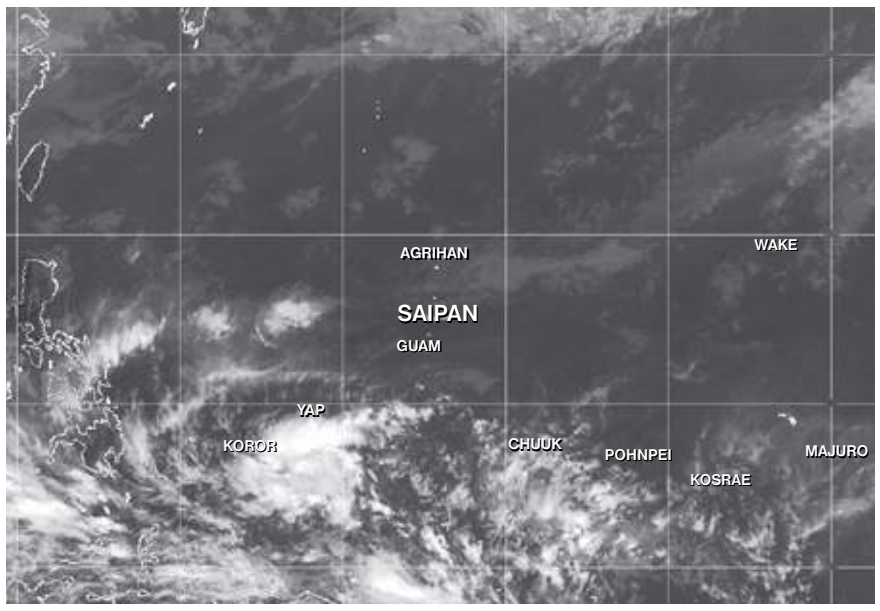
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Sunny	▲82	▼75
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼77
Yap	Rain	▲85	▼77
Chuuk	Partly Sunny	▲88	▼79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲85	▼78
Kosrae	Rain	▲86	▼81
Majuro	Showers	▲84	▼79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲71	▼65
Beijing	Cloudy	▲48	▼27
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲72	▼61
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲77	▼68
London	Rain/Snow	▲37	▼30
Los Angeles	Rain	▲64	▼50
Manila	Showers	▲84	▼74
Melbourne	Sunny	▲94	▼67
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲63	▼49
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲26	▼23
Osaka	Sunny	▲56	▼34
Paris	Rain	▲41	▼35
Pusan	Cloudy	▲61	▼40
Rome	Showers	▲55	▼46
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲49	▼38
San Francisco	Rain	▲57	▼48
Seoul	Cloudy	▲51	▼25
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲52	▼34
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲27	▼25

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, FEB. 4, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends southwestward from 25N174E to 18N160E to near Anatahan in the CNMI at 16N145E then finally to beyond 130E at 13N. Cloudiness, patchy rain and embedded heavier showers are found along and up to 200 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough extends east-southeastward from 5N130E through a circulation centered southeast of Koror to end at EQ145E. Numerous showers and scattered thunderstorms associated with the circulation are occurring between 3N and 10N from 135E to 142E. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms south of a line from 8N150E to 5N160E. Chuuk lies on the northwest edge of this area. Scattered showers are also occurring between Majuro and Tarawa within 125 miles of a line from 4N168E to 7N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
5:09 AM Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet
9:04 AM Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
2:21 PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
10:29 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:45 AM	6:17 PM
Friday	6:45 AM	6:17 PM
Saturday	6:45 AM	6:18 PM
Sunday	6:44 AM	6:18 PM
Monday	6:44 AM	6:19 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	1:38 PM	2:10 AM
Friday	2:42 PM	3:15 AM
Saturday	3:49 PM	4:17 AM
Sunday	4:55 PM	5:15 AM
Monday	5:59 PM	6:08 AM

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- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

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- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

NMI students take part in inauguration events

Five students from the Northern Mariana Islands attended the University Presidential Inaugural Conference in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 17-21, 2009.

Nicole M. Torres, Matthew Deleon Guerrero, Christina Ta, Marie Camacho, and Anne Atalig represented the Commonwealth at the conference, which led up to President Barack Obama's inauguration, parade, and the UPIC Inaugural Conference Gala.

Events during the conference included keynote addresses from former Secretary of State Colin Powell and former Vice President Al Gore, along with seminars and panel discussions hosted by a variety of distinguished guests, some of which included the Republican and Democratic parties and media correspondents.

Nicole M. Torres is a Sociology major, Legal Studies minor at the University of San Francisco, California.

Anne Atalig is a Biochemistry major at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.

Marie Camacho is a Criminal Justice major at the University of Nevada in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Christina Ta is a Physiological Science major at the University of California, Los Angeles in California.

Matthew Deleon Guerrero is an International Relations major at the Boise State University in Idaho. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Nicole M. Torres, Matthew Deleon Guerrero, and Christina Ta are seen enjoying themselves at the University Presidential Inaugural Conference participant in Washington, D.C.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Nicole M. Torres, center, and Anne Atalig, right, pose with an unidentified University Presidential Inaugural Conference participant in Washington, D.C.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marie Camacho, Nicole M. Torres, and Christina Ta have their picture taken at the University Presidential Inaugural Conference in Washington, D.C.

READING PROGRAM

The AmeriCorps Reading program was on Rota Saturday at the Sinapalo Elementary School. AmeriCorps members and volunteers are taught during their orientation in the fall how to facilitate Read Alouds, and activities related to the books they read to the children. In this case the book being presented was *Me and My Senses* by Joan Sweeney, illustrated by Annette Cable. Students drew pictures to illustrate the various senses, with assistance and guidance from the AmeriCorps members and volunteers. Then the poster was presented to all the attendees at the Saturday Reading program with input from everyone.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUT

Happy birthday to Jena T. Santos! Hope you enjoy your special day and many more to come. Love, Joe, Lathania, and Loutricia.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES

RFQ09-GOV-035

Central Garapan Waterline Replacement

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the CNMI Water Task Force, are soliciting statements of qualification (SOQ) from licensed architectural and engineering firms (A&E) for the Design of the Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project, Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The full Request for Qualifications (RFQ) documents may be obtained by contacting Pedro Sasamoto, WTF Program Manager, by telephone at (670) 664-2274 or by email at psas@saipan.com. All questions concerning this proposal shall be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 pm, January 27, 2009 to Mr. Sasamoto by facsimile at (670) 664-2279.

The design and construction of the Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project is made possible by a grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Commerce. All element of the construction process shall meet standards of the EDA. The EDA grant is matched by a grant from the Office of the Insular Affairs (OIA), U.S. Department of the Interior and requires a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) clearance.

One original and four (4) copies shall be submitted to the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, MP 96950 no later than **2:00 PM, (CNMI local time), on February 13, 2009**.

The SOQ shall be marked **"Central Garapan Waterline Replacement Project, RFQ09-GOV-035"**. For firms within the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of SOQ must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than **2:00 p.m. (CNMI local time), on February13, 2009**. Firms located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a **Notice of Intent to Propose**. Notices of Intent to Propose must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than **2:00 p.m. (CNMI local time), on February 13, 2009**, and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515 or email procurement@pticom.com. For firms located outside the CNMI, one original and four (4) copies of SOQ must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **February 13, 2009** AND must be received no later than **February 25, 2009**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a proposal.

The CNMI reserves the right to reject any and all SOQ and to waive any imperfections in any SOQ if to do so shall be in the best interests of the CNMI. All SOQ shall become the exclusive property of the CNMI government.

Timothy P. Villagomez
Lt. Governor

Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement & Supply

Business

Administration, Congress work on pay restrictions

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Obama administration plans to mandate new executive pay limits on Wednesday for government-assisted financial institutions in a new get-tough approach to bankers and Wall Street.

"If the taxpayers are helping you, then you've got certain responsibilities to not be living high on the hog," President Barack Obama said in an interview Tuesday with "NBC Nightly News".

The president and members of Congress are weighing various proposals to restrict chief executives' compensation as one of the conditions of receiving help under the $700 billion financial bailout fund.

Obama, who did not reveal details of the administration's compensation caps, plans to announce the new limits Wednesday at the White House with Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner. The White House disclosed the event Tuesday night.

Administration officials have said that the new restrictions would apply only to those struggling large firms that receive "exceptional assistance," such as the American International Group Inc., Citigroup Inc., and Detroit automakers. They would not apply to healthy banks that receive government infusions of capital.

And Obama's chief economic adviser, Larry Summers, has proposed that firms that want to pay executives above a certain threshold would have to compensate them with stock that could not be sold or liquidated until they pay back the government funds. The New York Times reported late Tuesday that the administration was expected to set a cap of $500,000 for top executives of large bailout recipients.

Top officials at companies that have received money from the government's Troubled Asset Relief Program already face some compensation limits. But elected officials want to place more caps, a sentiment reinforced in recent days by revelations that Wall Street firms paid more than $18 billion in bonuses in the midst of the economic downturn in 2008.

"I do know this: We can't just say, 'Please, please,'" said Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., who has proposed that no employee of an institution that receives money under the $700 billion federal bailout can receive more than $400,000 in total compensation until it pays the money back.

The figure is equivalent to the salary of the president of the United States.

Senate votes to give a tax break to new car buyers

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Senate voted Tuesday to give a tax break to new car buyers, setting aside bipartisan concerns over the size of an economic stimulus bill with a price tag edging above $900 billion. The 71-26 vote came as President Barack Obama said he lies awake nights worrying about the economy and signaled he'll try to knock out "buy American" provisions in the legislation to avoid a possible trade war.

Sen. Barbara Mikulski led the successful effort to allow many car buyers to claim an income tax deduction for sales taxes paid on new autos and interest payments on car loans.

She said the plan would aid the beleaguered automobile industry as well as create jobs at a time the economy is losing them at a rapid rate. "I believe we can help by getting the consumer into the showroom," she said.

The provision was attached to the economic stimulus bill at the heart of Obama's economic recovery plan and is subject to change or even elimination as the measure makes its way toward final passage.

Democratic leaders have pledged to have the bill ready for his signature by mid-month, and in a round of network television interviews, the president underscored the urgency. He told CNN that even three months ago, most economists would not have predicted the economy was "in as bad of a situation as we are in right now."

He also spoke out against efforts to require the use of domestic steel in construction projects envisioned in the bill, telling Fox News, "we can't send a protectionist message."

The stimulus bill remains a work in progress, following last week's party-line vote in the House and an Oval Office meeting on Monday in which Obama and Democratic leaders discussed ways to reach across party lines.

US *auto sales plunge 37 percent to 26-year low*

DETROIT (AP)—Consumers frightened by the prospect of losing their jobs stayed away from auto showrooms again in January and sent U.S. car and truck sales falling 37 percent, a familiar refrain for the struggling industry but an unwelcome start to a critical year for U.S. carmakers.

Devastated by an economy in which few people have the spare cash to buy a car or can obtain the financing to do it, Chrysler's domestic sales for January were less than half what they were a year earlier.

Sales fell 49 percent at General Motors and 40 percent at Ford. Toyota and Nissan's sales each fell at least 30 percent.

"How many ways can you say disaster?" asked Aaron Bragman, an auto industry analyst with the consulting firm IHS Global Insight in Troy, Mich. "That's across the board. It's not unique to one company."

With January's drop, the industry's sales have declined for 15 straight months when compared with the same month in the previous year. There hasn't been a year-over-year increase since October 2007, when light vehicle sales rose a paltry 1 percent, according to Autodata Corp. and Ward's AutoInfoBank.

The industry's sales of 656,976 vehicles, compared with just over a million in January 2008, translates to a seasonally adjusted annual sales rate of 9.57 million, according to Autodata. That's the worst performance since June 1982, when the nation was mired in a recession.

Huge declines in low-profit fleet sales to rental car companies made January an exceptionally bad month, even though automakers said they were encouraged that retail sales appeared to be stabilizing after four straight months with an industrywide sales plunge of at least 30 percent.

"If you're starting from an extremely low point, pretty much anywhere you go is up," said Bragman, whose company has predicted annual sales for this year of 10.3 million, down from last year's 13.2 million and 16.1 million in 2007.

But executives anticipated a treacherous beginning of 2009 before the market improves.

George Pipas, Ford Motor Co.'s top sales analyst, wasn't sure whether 15 months of industrywide sales declines is a record, but if it is, it won't last long.

Nation

President takes the blame in Daschle, Killefer controversy

WASHINGTON (AP)—Barack Obama on Tuesday abruptly abandoned his nomination fight for Tom Daschle and a second major appointee who failed to pay all their taxes, fearing a lingering ethics dispute would undercut his claims to moral high ground and cripple his presidency in just its second week. "I screwed up," Obama declared.

"It's important for this administration to send a message that there aren't two sets of rules—you know, one for prominent people and one for ordinary folks who have to pay their taxes," Obama said near the end of a day of jarring developments, little more than 24 hours after he had said he was "absolutely" committed to Daschle's confirmation.

"I'm frustrated with myself, with our team. ... I'm here on television saying I screwed up," Obama said on NBC's "Nightly News with Brian Williams." He repeated virtually the same words in interviews with other TV anchors.

Hours earlier, the White House had announced that Daschle had asked to be removed from consideration as health and human services secretary and that Nancy Killefer had made the same request concerning what was to be her groundbreaking appointment as a chief performance officer to make the entire government run better.

AP

Former Sen. Tom Daschle, President Barack Obama's choice to head the Health and Human Services, is followed by reporters as he leaves a closed session meeting with the Senate Finance Committee on Capitol Hill, Monday, Feb. 2, 2009, in Washington.

Daschle said in a brief letter to Obama that he refused to "be a distraction" from the new president's drive for health care reform. Obama said neither he nor Daschle excused the former Senate Democratic leader's tax errors but that he accepted his friend's decision "with sadness and regret."

Unsightly personal tax problems had been piling up for the new administration. Last week, the Senate confirmed Timothy Geithner as treasury secretary, but only after days of controversy over the fact that the man who would oversee the Internal Revenue Service had only belatedly paid $34,000 in income taxes.

Job prospects unclear for ousted Blagojevich

CHICAGO (AP)—Ousted as Illinois governor and looking for a job, Rod Blagojevich returned to national television on Tuesday to proclaim his innocence on corruption charges—perhaps angling for a future book deal or talk show.

But Blagojevich, a lawyer whose license is inactive, has some hurdles to overcome if he wants a new career. The biggest one: Who would hire him?

"A great many employers will not hire someone who has a felony charge pending against them," said Chicago defense attorney John Beal.

But some might offer him a job, if only to exploit the built-in publicity surrounding the scandal-tainted Democrat, especially as he gets closer to a trial on charges that could bring a lengthy prison term.

A federal indictment is expected by April on allegations that Blagojevich tried to auction off Barack Obama's vacant Senate seat. He was impeached by Illinois lawmakers, who stripped him of his job last week.

Blagojevich's publicist says offers are coming in, but he declined to provide details.

"Every day we get several offers of something he could do or would like to, and there are certainly no shortage of people who would love to speak with him," publicist Glenn Selig said.

Before the unanimous vote to remove Blagojevich, one Chicago radio show offered him a job if he would resign in the wake of his Dec. 9 arrest on federal corruption charges. He refused to step down.

5K rejected Minn. Senate ballots get another look

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP)—The judges in Minnesota's Senate election trial threw Republican Norm Coleman a lifeline on Tuesday, opening the door to adding nearly 5,000 rejected absentee ballots to a race that Democrat Al Franken leads by just 225 votes.

It wasn't a total victory for Coleman, who had wanted the judges to look at about 11,000 such ballots. He also has to prove the absentees were unfairly rejected, and it's likely that Franken would gain votes from the pile too.

But his attorneys had said the absentees were the centerpiece of his court challenge, and they cheered the ruling.

"This is a victory for thousands of Minnesotans whose rejected absentee ballots will now be properly reviewed in this election," Coleman attorney Ben Ginsberg said in a prepared statement.

While the judges limited Coleman's field of potential new votes, they allowed many more ballots than Franken had wanted. His attorneys had argued Coleman should be limited to about 650—the specific figure given in his initial Jan. 6 lawsuit.

The judges, however, ruled that the Jan. 6 filing laid out additional categories of ballots that should be examined.

The judges said they would look at two categories of rejected absentees: those where it appeared the voter had met the legal requirements, and those where voters might have run afoul of the law through no fault of their own.

The judges agreed to consider 4,797 rejected absentee ballots because that was the number Coleman said in a Jan. 23 filing met one of those two conditions.

Ginsberg said the 4,797 ballots was always "the universe of ballots we thought should be examined because they are valid." He said they never expected the rest to be brought into the count, but "we were willing to bring them here so everyone could see that."

Bat-killing syndrome spreads in Northeast

ROSENDALE, N.Y. (AP)—A mysterious and deadly bat disease discovered just two winters ago in a few New York caves has now spread to at least six northeastern states, and scientists are scrambling to find solutions before it spreads across the country.

White-nose syndrome poses no health threat to people, but some scientists say that if bat populations diminish too much, the insects and crop pests they eat could flourish. Researchers recently identified the fungus that creates the illness' distinctive white smudges on the noses and wings of hibernating bats, but they don't yet know how to stop the disease from killing off caves full of the ecologically important animals.

"The cause for concern is that this is going to race across the country faster than we can come up with a solution," said Alan Hicks, a wildlife biologist with New York state's Department of Environmental Conservation.

"Now that is entirely possible."

Bats with white-nose burn through their fat stores before spring, driving some to rouse early from hibernation in a futile search for food. Many die as they hunt fruitlessly for insects.

White-nose syndrome spread fast last winter to dozens of caves in New York and southern New England, within a roughly 150-mile radius of the caves west of Albany, N.Y., where it was first found. Early observations show it has reached farther still this winter, even before cave inspections and bat counts begin in earnest this month.

Bats with white-nose syndrome were found recently in northern New Jersey's Morris County and in an old iron mine in Shindle, Pa., more than 200 miles away from the outbreak's epicenter. In addition, the Pennsylvania Game Commission on Tuesday said that hundreds of little brown bats, a species devastated by white-nose syndrome, were found dead from the disease outside two mines in the northeastern part of the state.

AP

Michael Fishman collects bat skulls in an abandoned mine in Rosendale, N.Y., Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009.

The disease may have spread as far as 450 miles from the epicenter, to the John Guilday Caves Nature Preserve in West Virginia. The National Speleological Society has temporarily shut down the preserve as a possible white-nose sighting is investigated.

Octuplets mom is not getting showered with gifts

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Where is the lifetime supply of diapers, formula and baby wipes? The free van? The brand-new house?

Women who give birth to six, seven or eight babies are often showered with dazzling gifts from big corporations, local businesses and strangers. But that is not happening with the Southern California mother who delivered octuplets last week.

The news that she is a single mother with six other children—and that all 14 were conceived by having embryos implanted—seems to have turned off many people, and companies are not exactly rushing to get publicity by piling on the freebies.

Nadya Suleman, 33, has been lambasted by talk-show hosts, fertility experts, even her own mother, who has her hands full taking care of Suleman's other children, ages 2 to 7.

A veteran Hollywood publicist said Suleman's handlers have their work cut out for them in trying to win public sympathy for her.

"I think it's a calamity," said publicist David Brokaw, who has handled crises for celebrities. "I don't see, the way this is shaped, how you can say much about it in terms of something favorable."

Makers of diapers, formula and other products would probably want to steer clear of her, Brokaw said. He suggested she lie low for now and concentrate on crafting an image as a responsible parent.

Gerber spokesman David Mortazavi said that if the baby-food maker was planning to do something for the family, it probably would have done it already, and that the octuplets' birth was not on Gerber's radar. He would not elaborate.

Procter & Gamble spokeswoman Tricia Higgins said that the maker of Pampers does not actively seek out parents to sponsor, but that the octuplets' mother can ask for what is typically provided in multiple births: a jumbo pack of diapers for each child, baby wipes, and coupons for discounts. That is unlikely to last Suleman a week.

Conservative radio talk show host Bill Handel in Los Angeles, who has branded the births "freakish," said on the air Tuesday that people are ready to boycott any corporations that help the octuplets or their mother.

Ky. attorney general sues Ohio over rock squabble

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP)—The fight over a rock that lay for years at the bottom of the Ohio River spilled into federal court Tuesday when Kentucky sued an Ohio city, seeking the boulder's return.

Attorney General Jack Conway sued the city of Portsmouth, Ohio, and three men in federal court Tuesday over the 8-ton boulder known as Indian Head Rock. The lawsuit seeks the rock's return to Kentucky and the cost of damages.

The historic rock bears numerous carvings of initials, names and a crude face and once jutted above the surface of the river, serving as a navigation marker for boaters. However, it was overtaken by the river in about the 1920s and was submerged until September 2007, when a historian in Ohio led a team to remove it, saying it was in danger of being damaged or lost forever.

The boulder now rests in a city garage in Portsmouth, Ohio, along the Ohio River about 110 miles southeast of Cincinnati.

"We tried to negotiate for several months in good faith and we were unable to reach an agreement," Conway spokeswoman Allison Martin said. "We hoped we could work this out in a settlement that was suitable to both sides and bring the rock back to Kentucky, but we weren't able to do so."

Conway had proposed a settlement in November that would have avoided a federal lawsuit. It called for Indian Head Rock's return to Kentucky so it could be put on display. Conway also wanted a public apology and for the city of Portsmouth to pay attorneys' fees and build a display on the Kentucky side of the river.

Martin said the deadline to agree on a settlement was Feb. 1.

The lawsuit names the city of Portsmouth, former Mayor Gregory A. Bauer, historian Steve Shaffer, of Ironton, Ohio, and David G. Vetter of Portsmouth.

ACROSS THE NATION

Jet lands safely in Denver after bird hits engine

DENVER (AP)—A United Airlines jet returned safely to the Denver airport Tuesday after a bird was sucked into one of its engines shortly after takeoff. The engine that was struck continued to operate and the second engine wasn't affected, airline spokeswoman Megan McCarthy said. A passenger said the bird hit the right engine. None of the 151 passengers and crew was injured. The Boeing 757 had just left for San Francisco when the bird strike happened. McCarthy said the pilot's decision to return to the airport was a precaution. A US Airways jet splash-landed in New York's Hudson River on Jan. 15 after a collision with a flock of birds knocked out both engines. All 155 aboard survived. A passenger on the United flight, Frank Crowe of Chicago, said the pilot announced after landing, "It appears we hit a very large bird, something like an eagle."

Mass. couple who led gay marriage fight to divorce

BOSTON (AP)—A lesbian couple who led the fight for gay marriage in Massachusetts has filed for divorce. Julie and Hillary Goodridge were among seven gay couples who filed a lawsuit that led to a court ruling making Massachusetts the first state to legalize same-sex marriages in 2004. The couple became the public face of the debate in the state and married the first day same-sex marriages became legal. The divorce case was filed last week in Suffolk Probate and Family Court and was not unexpected. The couple announced they were separating in 2006. Messages left for the Goodridges were not immediately returned Tuesday.

Girl, 4, dies in washing machine with button start

MISSION VIEJO, Calif. (AP)—A 4-year-old girl in Southern California has died after she climbed into a washing machine that began tumbling when her toddler brother hit its simple push-button start. Orange County Sheriff's spokesman Jim Amormino said Kayley Ishii apparently climbed into the front-loading washer Monday afternoon. Her 15-month-old brother either bumped or pushed the button to start the machine. Amormino said the machine's controls were only 20 inches from the floor and the start switch was a simple push button. The girl was in the water-filled, tumbling machine for at least two minutes before her mother found her. An autopsy Tuesday found Kayley died of blunt force trauma and the death was ruled accidental.

PUBLIC NOTICE

THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY ANNOUNCES THE AVAILABILITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD FOR A REMOVAL ACTION AT CNMI ABANDONED PESTICIDE SITE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") announces that the Administrative Record for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands ("CNMI") Abandoned Pesticide Removal Site (Athe Site@) located on Middle Road in Gualo Rai, Saipan, CNMI is available for public review and comment.

The CNMI Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) offices has accumulated pesticides confiscated from cruise ships and other customs related seizures for years in its office storage building. The unsecured storage and ongoing deterioration of the pesticides containers could cause exposure to staff, visitors or workers in the surrounding area. The area is subject to extreme heat and humidity as well as typhoons that could cause the hazardous substances to migrate or be released into the Pacific Ocean. EPA will conduct a removal action to abate the hazards by stabilizing, solidifying, treating and repacking the containers and then transporting them to the United States. EPA determined that circumstances at this Site, if not addressed, may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health, welfare, or the environment.

The Administrative Record is a file that includes all documents upon which the EPA has based its decision to conduct a removal action at the Site. EPA encourages community members to review the Administrative Record and submit comments during the 30-day comment period, which begins with the publication of this notice and ends 30 days later. Copies of the Administrative Record will be available for public review at the following location:

Joeten-Kiyu Public Library
P.O. Box 501092, Saipan, CNMI 96950

Hours:
Monday – Friday: 10am – 6pm
Saturday : 9am – 4pm
Sunday/Holidays: Closed

Superfund Records Center
95 Hawthorne Street,
Suite 403S
San Francisco, CA 94105

Hours: Monday through
Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Call for an appointment at (415) 536-2000

Written comments on the
Administrative Record should be sent to:

Jeannie Wong (SFD-9)
U.S. EPA, Region IX
75 Hawthorne Street,
San Francisco, CA 94105
2/5/09
CNS-1515561#

Asia

Muslim rebels abduct 2 more in RP

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Muslim rebels abducted three employees of a lending company but one managed to escape—part of a wave of kidnappings in the southern Philippines that authorities acknowledged Wednesday they were unable to curb.

The armed rebels seized the three while they were traveling back to their office on a motorcycle with their cash collection late Tuesday. A marine and police manhunt was under way, provincial police chief Salik Macapantar said.

The latest abductions followed Monday's kidnapping of a businessman in Jolo by suspected Abu Sayyaf militants, the capture of three teachers last week and the seizure of Red Cross workers last month—all in the south, the scene of a decades-long rebellion by Muslim separatists.

During the latest kidnapping, which took place in Maluso township in southern Basilan province, one of the victims escaped from the gunmen, allegedly led by a Moro National Liberation Front guerrilla identified only as Commander Abugao.

The three rebels fled with their hostages and money toward a mountainous area, Macapantar said.

The rebel group signed a peace accord with the government in 1996 but many of its members kept their firearms and continued to live as outlaws.

Abugao may also have links with the Abu Sayyaf, a smaller but more violent al-Qaida-linked group that has been blamed for most of the recent kidnappings on Basilan and nearby Jolo island.

Basilan's 618 police have tried in vain to stop the kidnappings in the predominantly Muslim province of more than 300,000 people.

"We need more policemen," Macapantar said.

"Before, our strategy was to identify the possible targets who are prominent businessmen, the moneyed residents in the area. But now everyone is a target," said military spokesman Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres said.

On Monday, elusive Abu Sayyaf commanders Albader Parad and Radullan Sahiron, long wanted by U.S. and Philippine authorities for suspected involvement in several terror attacks and high-profile kidnappings, reportedly signed a letter addressed to President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo demanding troops leave the area as a condition for the release of the three international Red Cross workers kidnapped on Jan 12. The military rejected the demand.

Myanmar: If UN wants stability, drop sanctions

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—A leader of Myanmar's military regime gave the U.N.'s visiting envoy a cold reception Tuesday, telling him the world body should lift economic sanctions and visa bans if it wants to see political stability, state television reported.

Special envoy Ibrahim Gambari met with Prime Minister Gen. Thein Sein before ending his four-day visit with no public comment—and no sign of progress on promoting democracy and political reconciliation.

Myanmar's military, which has ruled the country since 1962, when it was known as Burma, tolerates virtually no dissent.

Western nations, including the United States, impose economic and political sanctions on Myanmar because of its poor human rights record and failure to restore democracy.

Gambari reportedly asked Thein Sein to release more political prisoners, to consider a dialogue with detained opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and to make the military-guided political process inclusive for all.

"If the U.N. wants to see economic development and political stability, the U.N. should first try to remove economic sanctions and visa bans," was the prime minister's response, according to state television reported.

Thein Sein said economic sanctions amount to human rights violations, affecting health, economic and social conditions.

On Monday, Gambari met with Suu Kyi, a minor breakthrough because she had refused to see him on his previous visit in August last year. She has expressed disappointment with the U.N.'s failure to persuade the ruling junta to give up its monopoly on power.

Suu Kyi, who is under house arrest, has been detained more than 13 of the past 19 years.

Gambari did not meet with junta chief Senior Gen. Than Shwe during this week's visit, as he did on his previous three trips.

ASIAN BRIEFS

US supply routes in Afghanistan squeezed 2 ways

KABUL (AP)—U.S. troops in Afghanistan saw their supply lines squeezed from the north and east Tuesday after militants blew up a bridge in Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan's government said it would end American use of a key air base following Russia's announcement of new aid. Securing efficient and safe supply routes into Afghanistan has become a top priority for U.S. officials as the Pentagon prepares to send in up to 30,000 more American soldiers this year. Some 75 percent of U.S. supplies travel through Pakistan, where militants have stepped up attacks on truck convoys destined for U.S. bases. Attackers on Tuesday blew up a bridge in northwestern Pakistan in a fresh salvo in an escalating campaign seeking to cripple Washington's war effort in Afghanistan. The red metal bridge in the Khyber Pass partially twisted and collapsed on one end, with chunks of concrete scattered about. A trailer truck caught on the span—about 15 miles northwest of Peshawar—fell on its side and spilled dozens of bags.

With unusual candor, China reports shoe throwing

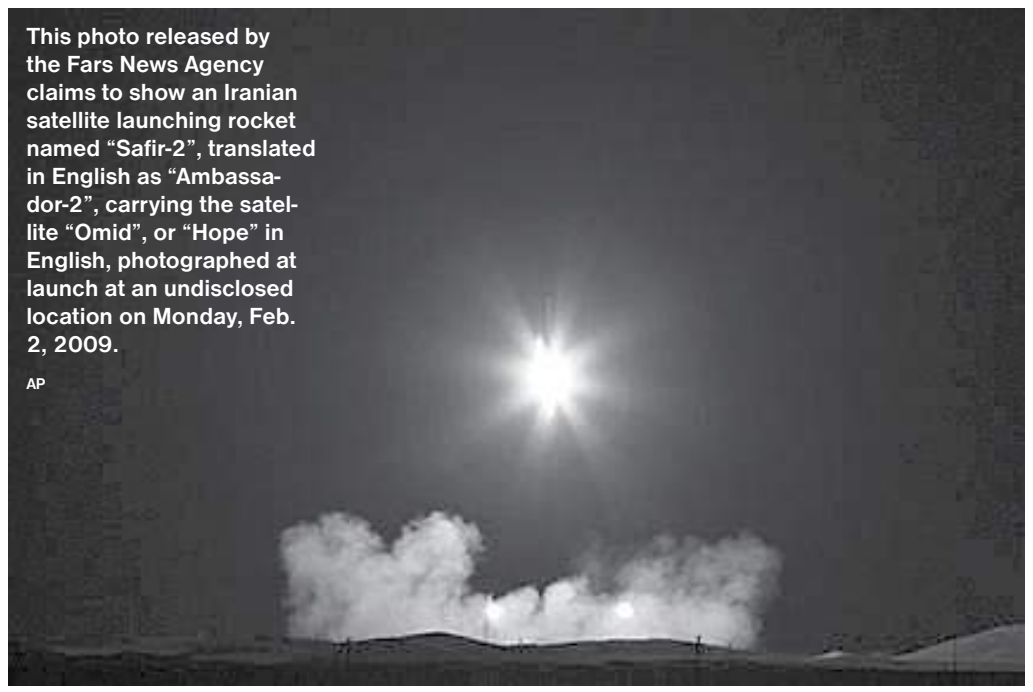
BEIJING (AP)—It hesitated for hours over the sensitive footage of a protester in Britain shouting "dictator" and throwing a shoe at Premier Wen Jiabao. But finally, China's carefully controlled state broadcaster ran it Tuesday. The move was a remarkable display of openness—but the footage already was leaking into China via satellite television and the Internet. Critics said it showed the increasing power of such media to erode strict information controls. "It is impossible for a country to shut out a piece of news," said Shao Peiren, head of Zhejiang University's communications research institute in eastern China. The broadcast might also help the government by appealing to Chinese patriotism. Wen is the leadership's most popular figure, and he emerged as the hero after last year's devastating earthquake, calling himself "Grandpa Wen."

Sri Lankan rebel leader's fate a mystery

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—At the height of his power, the Tamil commander ran a shadow state. His guerrilla force, backed by artillery, a navy and a tiny air force, reportedly took in hundreds of millions from donations and smuggling. Now he is hiding in a jungle. Or he has fled to Malaysia. Or maybe he is dead. With his rebel separatist group on the brink of defeat at the hands of the Sri Lankan military, Velupillai Prabhakaran's fate remains a mystery. But then, he has lived most of his life in the shadows. What happens to Prabhakaran could be crucial to the future of the ethnic Tamil rebel group he founded. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam is so centralized that without a leader it would almost certainly spin into disarray and the war would come to a swift close.

World

Iran claims launch of own satellite



This photo released by the Fars News Agency claims to show an Iranian satellite launching rocket named "Safir-2", translated in English as "Ambassador-2", carrying the satellite "Omid", or "Hope" in English, photographed at launch at an undisclosed location on Monday, Feb. 2, 2009.

AP

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran sent its first domestically made satellite into orbit, the president announced Tuesday, a key step for an ambitious space program that worries the U.S. and other world powers because the same rocket technology used to launch satellites can also deliver warheads.

For nearly a decade, Iran has sought to develop a national space program, creating unease among international leaders already concerned about its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

The telecommunications satellite—called Omid, or hope, in Farsi—was launched late Monday after President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad gave the order to proceed, according to a report on state radio. State television showed footage of what it said was the nighttime liftoff of the rocket carrying the satellite at an unidentified location in Iran.

Hamas prepared for 1-year truce with open borders

CAIRO (AP)—Hamas officials said Tuesday they are ready to commit to a cease-fire with Israel for at least a year in exchange for a full opening of Gaza's borders, as the group began a new round of truce talks with Egyptian mediators.

At the same time, foreign ministers of pro-U.S. Arab nations, including Saudi Arabia, met in the United Arab Emirates in a show of unity in support for Egypt's efforts to forge a long-term truce and against Iran, Hamas' most important ally.

Egypt is trying to mediate a durable cease-fire in place of the temporary and increasingly wobbly truce that ended the Gaza war last month. It has set a Thursday deadline for the Islamic militant rulers of Gaza to accept a deal.

But the complicated details of an accord appeared unresolved with border security arrangements a key obstacle.

"There is an agreement in principle about a calm for one year," said Ahmed Abdel-Hadi, a Lebanon-based Hamas official. "But the movement could show flexibility regarding the time ... if there are guarantees and commitments to lift the sanctions and open the borders," he told Gaza's Al Quds Radio, signaling the possibility of extending the truce beyond one year.

WORLD BRIEFS

Merkel: Pope must clarify Holocaust stance

BERLIN (AP)—German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on Pope Benedict XVI to make a "very clear" rejection of Holocaust denials after the Vatican's rehabilitation of a former bishop who questioned whether 6 million Jews were gassed by the Nazis. Merkel's rare and public demand came amid increasing outrage among Germany's Roman Catholic leaders over the German-born pope's decision. Merkel said she "does not believe" there has been adequate clarification of the Vatican's position on the Holocaust amid the controversy over the lifting of the excommunication of British-born Richard Williamson. Benedict last week expressed "full and indisputable solidarity" with Jews and warned against any denial of the horror of the Holocaust, but several leading German bishops have decried the decision and called for the rehabilitation to be revoked.

'Mother' of Iraqi women bomber network arrested

BAGHDAD (AP)—A woman accused of helping recruit dozens of female suicide bombers looked into the camera and described the process: trolling society for likely candidates and then patiently converting the women from troubled souls into deadly attackers. The accounts, in a video released Tuesday by Iraq police, offer a rare glimpse into the networks used to find and train the women bombers who have become one of the insurgents' most effective weapons as they struggle under increasing crackdowns. In a separate prison interview with The Associated Press, with interrogators nearby, the woman said she was part of a plot in which young women were raped and then sent to her for matronly advice. She said she would try to persuade the victims to become suicide bombers as their only escape from the shame and to reclaim their honor.

Kenya tanker blaze highlights poverty, corruption

MOLO, Kenya (AP)—When word spread that a gasoline tanker had overturned and was spilling fuel for the taking, it seemed to many in this impoverished region to be a small blessing, a gift from a life that never gives out anything for free. Hundreds grabbed plastic jerrycans and headed toward the roadside crash—some to siphon fuel, some—including small children—to simply watch the spectacle. But touched by a lighted cigarette, the fuel exploded into an inferno that killed at least 120 people on Saturday. "We cannot think about the dangers," said James Kibiwott, 35, whose legs were burned as he tried to run from the flames. "Our lives here, we collect what is thrown on the road. If money hadn't been a problem of course we would not have rushed there."

Environment

NMI environmental leaders take part in region-wide retreat

POHNPEI, Federated States of Micronesia—Local conservation strategies and community involvement were in full display last week in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, as environmental leaders from across the region participated in the 11th Micronesians in Island Conservation Retreat.

The retreat, which lasted from Jan. 26 to 30, was held at the former Pohnpei Agricultual & Trade School in the Madolenihmw municipality of Pohnpei. The purposes of having the retreat in a remote site were so that the participants could become immersed in the local culture and community and develop closer ties with one another.

Environmental leaders from across the Micronesia region participated in the retreat. Representing government and non-government, managers and advocates, local and national levels, up-and-coming and veteran conservationists, the 20 participants hailed from the CNMI, Guam, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Members of Micronesians in Island Conservation pose in front of the Kepirohi Waterfall in Pohnpei.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Angelo Villagomez, Fran Castro, and Dr. Peter Houk of the CNMI have their picture taken on the bamboo raft stationed at the Enpein Marine Protected Area.

During the retreat members set short- and long-term personal, professional, and institutional goals. Many of the members have similar goals, or set goals that other members have already attained. Members learn from one another and collaborate together on meeting their goals.

"As a young conservationist I can look at some of the members who have been doing this for 30 years and learn from them," said Angelo Villagomez of Beautify CNMI.

Members also discuss common institutional and conservation challenges during the retreats. These sessions are "break-out" sessions. Members "break-out" into small groups to discuss challenges recommend ways forward and determine next steps. After meeting in the small groups, members bring their findings back to the group at large for more discussion.

One of the conservation challenges discussed by members this year was surviving climate change. Marine protected areas, like the recently established Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, were identified as a buffer to the effects of climate change.

According to Marshall Islands Conservation Society executive director Steve Why, "Our contributions to climate change are small compared to what larger nations contribute, but due to our number of low-lying atolls, the effects of climate change will arrive sooner and be more severe in Micronesia than elsewhere on the globe."

The members also had time to become immersed in the local culture and community. On the first night of the retreat they were welcomed by the Meninkeder Lapalap of Madolenihmw municipality and participated in a sakau ceremony.

On Wednesday they visited the Enpein community and their local marine protected area. They toured the bamboo raft the community uses for monitoring and surveillance of the Enpein Marine Protected Area and were treated to a feast and another sakau ceremony in the village.

"I was really impressed by the amount of community buy-in. I would love to follow their model to get our community more involved in conservation," commented Fran Castro of Saipan.

The two MIC members from the CNMI are Division of Environmental Quality's Fran Castro and Beautify CNMI's Angelo Villagomez. Dr. Peter Houk and Laurie Peterka from CNMI were also invited to the retreat. New members of MIC are identified by the current membership of MIC, based on the needs of the MIC network. The CNMI is expected to gain a third member in time for the next retreat.

The purpose of MIC is to strengthen the collaborative, organizational, technical, and policy skills of leaders and organizations so that, together with communities, they can advance the conservation and management of important natural areas in Micronesia.

The 12th MIC Retreat will take place in October in Palau. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-CHC-048

SUBMISSION: MARCH 03, 2009 • TIME: 3:00 P.M.

"OUTSIDE GROUND MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO **MR. TOMAS S. PALACIOS, MANAGER OF GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES** BY FAX TO (670) 234-8930 OR E-MAILED TO tspalacios@gmail.com NO LATER THAN **FEBRUARY 19, 2009 CLOSE OFBUSINESS.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERECED IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
Secretary of Health

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

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(670) 233-8538 fax

Attorney for Heir Angelina Chong Villagomez

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the Estate of	)	CIVIL ACTION NO. 08-0340A
RAMON GARRIDO VILLAGOMEZ, Deceased.	)	NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for Letters of Administration seeking the appointment of **Angelina Chong Villagomez** as Administratrix for the Estate of **RAMON GARRIDO VILLAGOMEZ** (Deceased), was filed in the above entitled Court. A hearing has been set for the above-entitled matter and will be held in Courtroom 223A of the Commonwealth Superior Court, located at the House of Justice-Guma Hustisia-Imwal Aweewe, Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands at 9:30 a.m., on March 9, 2009.

All persons who having any objection to the petition, or having a claim against the Estate or against the deceased, should file their claim with the Clerk of Court of the Commonwealth Superior Court within sixty (60) days after the first publication of this notice.

Dated this 20th day of January, 2009.

/s/ Hon. David A. Wiseman

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attoney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670) 234-7859
Fax. (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Bank of Guam

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF GUAM, Plaintiff,	)	CIVIL ACTION NO. 08-0073
vs.	)	
VALENTINE S. CABRERA, Defendant.	)	AMENDED SUMMONS

TO: THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT VALENTINE CABRERA

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO APPEAR by the 21st day after the fourth date of publication of this AMENDED SUMMONS and defend the above entitled action in the CNMI SUPERIOR COURT, at the Office of Clerk of Court, CNMI SUPERIOR COURT, 1st Floor, Guma' Hustisia, Imwal Aweewe, House of Justice, Susuper Village, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan MP 96950-0307; and answer the complaint of the plaintiff Bank of Guam, and serve a copy of your answer upon **Robert Tenorio Torres**, attorney for Plaintiff Bank of Guam, at **Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya), P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950**; and in case of failure to do so, judgement will be rendered against you according to the demand of the COMPLAINT, which has been filed with the Clerk of Court.

So **ORDERED** this 13th day of January 2009.

/s/ Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-SOF-051

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 27, 2009 • TIME: 3:30 P.M.

"TO LEASE / DEVELOP / REVITALIZE LA FIESTA PROPERTY"

The Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, through the Secretary of Finance, is soliciting proposals from interested individuals, businesses, investors and project developers, for the lease, redevelopment and revitalization of the La Fiesta Property, including upgrading and renovating all existing facilities, within the commercial complex across from Palms Resort in San Roque, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A copy of the specification may be obtained at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply in Lower Base, Saipan during regular working hours. Preference is available to U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents as per Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118 and must be submitted with the proposal if preference is claimed.

For information regarding the technical description of the La Fiesta Property, including existing leases on the property, please contact the Secretary of Finance at (670) 664-1100 or write to P.O. Box 5234, CHRB, Saipan MP 96950.

/s/ **ELOY S. INOS**
Secretary of Finance

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP09-DOC-044

SUBMISSION: FEBRUARY 19, 2009 • TIME: 4:00 P.M.

"FACILITATING AND DEVELOPING A MILITARY STRATEGIC PLANNING DOCUMENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE-COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY COMMISSION"

THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO MR. MICHAEL ADA, SECRETARY OF COMMERCE VIA E-MAIL TO depcommerce.ada@gmail.com OR FAX TO (670) 664-3067 NO LATER THAN 4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, FEBRUARY 09, 2009.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERECED IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **MICHAEL ADA**
SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS
RFQ09-DLNR-041

SUBMISSION DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2009 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PROJECT MANAGER FOR THE SMILING COVE MARINA REHABILITATION PROJECT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCES"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE DLNR-DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE SMILING COVE MARINA OFFICE, AT SMILING COVE. **A NON-REFUNDABLE PAYMENT OF FIFTY DOLLARS (US$50.00) IS REQUIRED FOR A COPY. PAYMENT MUST BE MADE TO THE CNMI TREASURER.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFQ MUST ME SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO DR. IGNACIO T. dela CRUZ D.V.M., SECRETARY OF DLNR, LOWER BASE DRIVE, SAIPAN OR FAXED TO (670) 322-2633 NO LATER THAN **4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME FEBRUARY 18, 2009.**

/s/ **DR. IGNACIO T. dela CRUZ, D.V.M**
SECRETARY OF DLNR

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

Life & Style

How to turn a corner or a closet into a home office

By TERRI SAPIENZA
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

More than 20 million people work from home at least once a week, according to the latest figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Wireless technology has made this easy at a time when a struggling economy has forced many people to spend more time at home.

If you work at home full time or just require a place to sort mail, pay bills and check your e-mail, having a dedicated space to get the job done is essential.

"Even if people are downsizing, they want a room for an office. People who didn't have a computer 10 years ago have them now," says Nancy Itteilag, a real estate agent with Long & Foster in Washington.

Tim Burch, the president of Burch Builders Group in Warrenton, Va., says almost every home his company builds now includes an office. In older homes, remodeling jobs have included conversions of loft spaces, rooms over the garage, basements, spare bedrooms and even dining rooms into places where homeowners can park their computers.

"More and more people need a home base," says Arlington, Va., designer Melissa Broffman, "and that little communication center in the kitchen is not going to cut it."

For a time, the typical home office was a built-in desk area in the kitchen. Once on everyone's renovation wish list, the kitchen desk is falling out of favor, experts say. The spaces end up being too small and easily cluttered. "You're always going to find a need for a calendar or computer in the kitchen, but you get so much traffic in there, and it doesn't always make the kitchen look its best," Broffman says. "People want to get away and get a quieter environment in which to work."

But what if you're short on spare rooms? Look for "an unused pocket of space that can be fitted with shelves, cabinets, (electrical) power and a chair," says Amy Gardner, a D.C. architect. She converted a bedroom closet in her Washington apartment into her work space. She removed the clothing rod and installed shelves and a countertop that flips down as needed.

"I just pull up a chair, and I have a home office," she says.

She also removed the closet door and replaced it with a bookshelf on wheels that's connected to a ceiling track. When she wants to close up her office, she simply slides the bookshelf in front of it. (For the non-architects among us, keeping the door works, too. So does installing a curtain rod to hang a pretty panel in place of a door.)

Broffman likes to paint a closet's interior walls and any installed shelving the same color, or hang wallpaper in the back of the closet for a more custom look. If you're considering converting your closet, she says, be sure you have a place for files, a phone line if needed, a lamp, electrical outlets and an adequate power supply. For those on a budget, she suggests brainstorming at the Container Store and making it a smaller-scale DIY project.

Chris Plantan, founder and owner of Russell+Hazel paper company in Minneapolis, says she and her husband struggled with where to create a home office. They finally decided to use their dining room, but adjustments had to be made. For example, an old farm table, which they used for dining, had an uneven top that made it unsuitable for writing. Rather than replace the table, they simply put a piece of glass on top, transforming the table into a functional desk. "There are so many ways you can create a home office without having an `office,' " Plantan says. "Just open up your mind a little."

Plantan also likes to think beyond boxes for storage. She uses jars and trays to hold supplies. For her home, she bought a large leather jewelry box from Pottery Barn and filled it with office supplies. At the Russell+Hazel office, an old glass pastry case from a bakery holds printer paper and other supplies.

Whether you have an entire room, a converted closet or a tiny nook carved out of a corner, the basic essentials for any well-run office are the same, says Peggy Hackett, a professional organizer and founder of Come to Order Consulting in the District of Columbia. You need a desk, a comfortable chair, storage, paper and pen, and proper lighting. "You don't have to spend a lot," says Hackett, who suggests looking for what you need at the Container Store, Home Depot, Ikea and Staples.

For storage, she prefers simple colored boxes because they "allow you to hide your work," she says, "to put it away so it's not out there for people to see." Her favorite storage item is a plastic file crate with wheels. "It holds letter and legal hanging files, it's portable and it's inexpensive."

A common mistake people make when setting up a home office area, says Hackett, is to overlook vertical space, where tall bookcases or hanging shelves can provide extra storage. "People tend to go horizontal instead of vertical, which uses a lot of space and can get junky," she says. "Using vertical space makes a space look cleaner, neater and less cluttered."

And as is the case with everything in the home, keeping things uncluttered is key.

"An office space doesn't have to be large or grand," says Plantan, "just well-thought-out and organized.

"And make sure your technology works."

FOR YOUR OFFICE

Maxwell desk lamp, $169 at www.potterybarn.com.
Bella pencil cups, $34 each at www.seejanework.com.
Collapsible collator, $30 at www.russellandhazel.com.
Parsons desk, $299 at www.westelm.com.
Upholstered Parsons chair in celery twill with casters, $271 at www.ballarddesigns.com.

THE WASHINGTON POST

No spare room for an office? Consider converting a closet into one like this suggestion from the Container Store.

THE WASHINGTON POST

Think outside the storage box for supplies. Chris Plantan of Russell+Hazel uses a leather jewelry box from Pottery Barn to organize pens, stamps, stationery and more.

Three cures for clutter

By TERRI SAPIENZA
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

So, you've set up an organized office space. Here's how to keep it that way:

--Get a handle on mail.
"When you get it, go through it immediately," says Peggy Hackett, a professional organizer in the District of Columbia. Pull out the junk mail and put it in the recycling bin. Take bills out of their mailing envelopes, put them together with their return envelopes, and then place them on a spot on a desk just for bills. "Doing this every day is best, but if that's not possible, choose a designated day to go through your mail, and stick to it."

--Keep up with filing.
"We tend to let filing pile up, and at some point it's going to get overwhelming," Hackett says. "If you work from home, pick a designated day to do administrative stuff. If you can't do a whole admin day, then take a couple of hours, but take the time to do it." Don't go more than a week without filing or going through mail.

--Buy a shredder.
This is important, Hackett says. Shred new credit card offers and anything with personal information on it.

Adele's voice belies her age

By TODD MARTENS
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Adele is up for best new artist at this weekend's Grammy Awards.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—Adele Laurie Blue Adkins doesn't believe classic soul is necessarily making a comeback—this despite the fact that she and her countrywoman, Duffy, another artist with a hankering for '60s-inspired R&B, are up for best new artist at the Grammy Awards on Feb. 8. In fact, the 20-year-old, sitting at her room in The London West Hollywood hotel, dismisses the very concept of retro soul with a wave of her hand and a drag on her cigarette.

She traces her accomplishments to one artist, and one artist only: Amy Winehouse. "It's good that Duffy and I are doing well, but I think it's part of the Amy thing," Adele says. "The world just wants more Amy."

Such a hypothesis might carry some weight if Adele weren't in many ways the antithesis of Winehouse. There are superficial differences: Winehouse can't stay out of the tabloids; Adele is terrified of appearing in them. For that reason, she says, she has given up the party scene to instead "stay home, watch films and Google myself."

And whereas Winehouse's thinness is a matter of constant debate, Adele repeatedly has stated that she's perfectly happy with her non-Hollywood curves.

Then there's the music. If Adele gets lumped in with her vintage-loving peers, blame her vocals. Although her chain-smoking may come back to haunt her, the young singer can lace a simple acoustic-driven number such as "Best for Last" with an old-soul, nicotine-scratched elegance.

Initially released on British independent XL Recordings and licensed to Columbia in the United States, "19" is a showcase for Adele's versatility. She's just as adept at handling a guitar confessional ("Crazy for You") as she is a more snappy, bluesy number ("My Same"), and the listener always gets the sense that a jazzy improvisation may be just around the corner.

"It's very hard to find anything that is not influenced by black American music, in one way or another," XL founder Richard Russell says. "Everything is rooted back to the blues. What we've seen in the U.K. is an amazing wealth of talent shared by young female solo artists, and there's maybe an unspoken competition there."

There's also a shared history. As a pop-music-obsessed teen—she cites Britney Spears and the Pussycat Dolls among her first loves—Adele attended the BRIT school in Croydon, England, the free performing arts and technology high school just outside London that counts among its alumni Winehouse, Kate Nash and Leona Lewis.

"The first state high school I was at? Nothing against it, but ... all of my friends from school have kids," Adele says. "Not because they didn't have things to do, but that's just what you did. It's rubbish. Things were looking quite bleak. Then I got to go to school with 400 other kids who wanted to be something."

For Adele, that something came quickly. She signed with XL three days after graduating, even though Russell had little to go on other than a MySpace page with some early cuts of the songs released on "19."

"She had an extremely strong idea of what she wanted to do," Russell says. "I don't think you get that from BRIT School. You get that when you have great instincts."

Adele is winning fans in the United States, thanks in part to an appearance Oct. 18 as the musical guest on "Saturday Night Live," the night Alaska governor and vice-presidential nominee Sarah Palin visited the show.After the spot, sales of "19" took off. Released a year ago, "19" sold 144,000 copies through Oct. 12, according to Nielsen SoundScan. In the first full sales week after her "SNL" appearance, "19" sold 25,000 copies. It has sold tens of thousands more since then.

Adele has laid out a clear plan for her follow-up, which she'll record this spring in Los Angeles. She cites "Raising Sand," the Grammy-nominated album from Robert Plant and Alison Krauss, as the template. Not that she's about to go country, but she has designs on a more cohesive, less genre-hopping record.

"I love the songs on ("19"), but I don't think they're the best that I can do," Adele says. "I've started writing new songs, and they've got more depth to them. This is a cliche to say, but I've grown up loads in the last year. I started as a child, but I'm almost 21 and I'm almost a full-fledged adult."

If she doesn't win a Grammy, that's fine with her. Adele has long-term plans. "A Grammy is like an Oscar," she says. "You win an Oscar when you give the performance of your life. I hope this isn't the performance of my life."

Phoenix confirms he's walking the hip-hop line

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Joaquin Phoenix says there's no hoax about it: He really has given up acting to become a hip-hop musician. Phoenix has been spending his time laying down tracks for a rap album in the recording studio he built at his home, the two-time Academy Award nominee said Tuesday in an interview to promote what he claims is his final movie, "Two Lovers."

After video hit the Internet last month capturing part of Phoenix's debut rap performance at a Las Vegas club, speculation swirled that he was perpetrating an elaborate practical joke.

"I don't know where that comes from," Phoenix said. "If it comes from people that I've had a falling out with, that are (ticked) off at me?"

The video shows Phoenix, in a long, scraggly beard, rapping nearly inaudibly and ends with him losing his footing and falling off the stage. It was an inauspicious start, but Phoenix was adamant that his hip-hop career is real.

"There's not a hoax," Phoenix said. "Might I be ridiculous? Might my career in music be laughable? Yeah, that's possible, but that's certainly not my intention."

Phoenix's friend and brother-in-law, Casey Affleck, was on hand with a camera crew as he did interviews for "Two Lovers." Affleck, who is shooting a documentary about Phoenix's transition to music, said his friend is completely serious.

Phoenix, 34, said he had not expected anyone to care when he made the surprise announcement last fall that he was quitting Hollywood for music. At the time, fans assumed he might build on the country roots he laid down playing Johnny Cash in "Walk the Line," on which he learned to play guitar and did his own singing.

His new rap persona added to the confusion, but Phoenix said he is a longtime fan of hip-hop, speaking fervently about Public Enemy, Ice Cube and other artists he admires.

Actor Joaquin Phoenix poses for a portrait in Beverly Hills Calif., on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2009.

AP

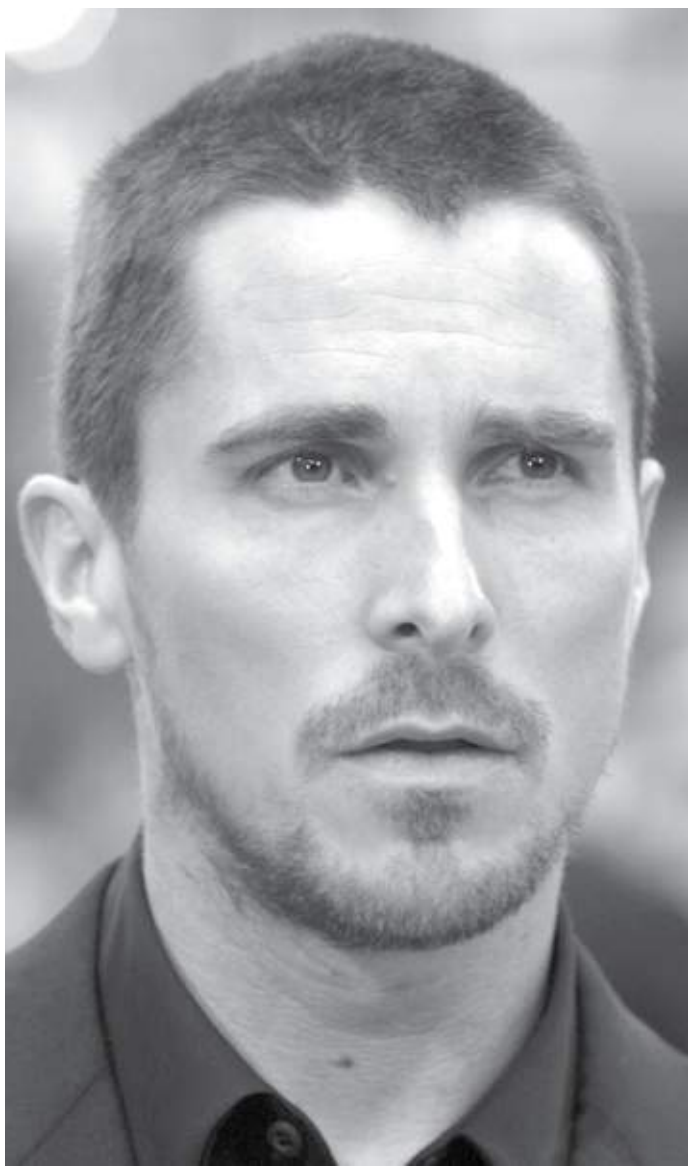
Phoenix said he has no intention of returning to film after "Two Lovers," a romantic drama co-starring Gwyneth Paltrow and reuniting him with James Gray, his director on "The Yards" and "We Own the Night." The movie opens Feb. 13.

While Phoenix regrets that his coming-out party as a rapper came through poor-quality video over the Internet, he said people would have ridiculed him no matter how good his debut was.

"It sucks that, yeah, the footage is out there as like this incredibly bad sound, and you literally can't hear what's happening," said Phoenix, who still has his bushy beard. "It was much better in the club, and I don't know who said that people were booing ... because that was not happening.

"Unless, of course, it's a pretty big place, and maybe it was happening," Phoenix added, laughing. "But it was not my experience. My experience afterward was I had a lot of dudes come up and say, `We really respect you for doing it, putting yourself out there, and going with it.' Because I think true hip-hop heads know that it's hard, it's going to be a hard transition, and people are going to be lining up just to make fun of me."

Batman goes Bale-istic with profane tirade on crew



AP

In this July 21, 2008 file photo, British actor Christian Bale arrives for the European Premiere of "The Dark Knight", in central London.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Dark Knight indeed.

Christian Bale can be heard in newly surfaced audio delivering a long, profanity-laced verbal thrashing to a cinematographer and anyone who tried to calm him down on the set of the upcoming movie "Terminator Salvation."

The three-minute clip was posted Monday on the Web site TMZ.com and has become a viral sensation on the Internet—it's even spawned a dance music remix of the audio tape.

In it, the actor who portrayed Batman in "The Dark Knight" rails against cinematographer Shane Hurlbut for apparently walking behind co-star Bryce Dallas Howard and through Bale's line of sight, considered a film-set foul.

"If you do it one more time I ain't walking on this set if you're still hired!" Bale howls in one of the few publishable moments from the clip.

Later, he screams: "Do you want me to go and trash your lights? Do you want me to go and trash them? ... Then why are you trashing my scene?"

The incident took place last July on the set at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, days before Bale would face assault allegations from his mother and sister in London. Charges were never filed because his family did not want to press the matter and because prosecutors said there was a lack of sufficient evidence.

Bale's is the only voice that is audible on the tape, though he's clearly responding to Hurlbut, the film's director McG, and others trying to persuade him to relax.

"Let's not take a (expletive) minute! Let's go again!" he yells at one point.

A phone message left early Tuesday with a publicist for the 35-year-old actor wasn't immediately returned.

Meanwhile, Bale has become an unwitting music sensation because of the incident.

Music producer Lucian Piane—who goes by the name RevoLucian online—remixed the verbal freak-out into a three-minute-long hypnotic dance track titled "Bale Out." Piane uploaded the beat-driven track Monday to MySpace and YouTube, where it's already received over 200,000 views.

He said he was drawn to the musicality of Bale's rage-filled voice. He previously released remixes online featuring Sarah Palin, a ranting Bill O'Reilly and Andrew "Don't Taze Me, Bro" Meyer. Piane said the satirical remixes are "just a hobby."

"I think most people are enjoying it," said Piane, who added that he created the pulsating tune in just three hours and is currently at work on RuPaul's next album. "I don't know if Christian Bale is enjoying it, but I hope he does. I think I've taken something that maybe made him look really bad and turned it into something that all these people are enjoying."

Ben Stein cancels Vermont speech in evolution row

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP)—Comedian Ben Stein has withdrawn as the University of Vermont's commencement speaker because of complaints about his critical views on evolution in favor of intelligent design.

UVM President Daniel Fogel said he chose Stein based on the warm response to a lecture he gave on campus last spring. Fogel said, however, he was deluged with e-mail messages from people offended by Stein's views of science.

Stein

When told about the criticism, Stein—who was to be paid $7,500—backed out of the May 17 commencement, Fogel said.

"I did not ask him not to come," he said. "I was not going to let him be blind-sided by controversy."

The former host of Comedy Central's "Win Ben Stein's Money" quiz show, Stein has drawn fire previously for criticizing evolutionary theory and speaking in favor of intelligent design. That view holds that life is too complex to have developed through evolution alone, implying that a higher power must have had a hand in creation.

Stein told the Burlington Free Press that he was not "anti-science" as some critics have labeled him.

"I am far more pro-science than the Darwinists," Stein wrote in an e-mail to the newspaper. "I want all scientific inquiry to happen not just what the ruling clique calls science."

He said the controversy over him as commencement choice was "laughable" and "pathetic."

Fogel said he was sorry that he did not anticipate the extent and intensity of the concerns expressed about Stein.

Stein, 64, a graduate of Yale Law School, worked as a Federal Trade Commission lawyer and wrote speeches for presidents Nixon and Ford. As an actor, he is best known by some as the droll teacher in "Ferris Bueller's Day Off."

In a 2008 documentary entitled "Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed," he asserted that scientists are afraid to challenge the theory of evolution because they fear they'll be ostracized or fired.

Sam Lutfi sues Britney Spears, parents

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Britney Spears' former manager and friend Osama "Sam" Lutfi filed a libel and defamation lawsuit Tuesday against the singer and her parents.

Lutfi's lawsuit came just three days after a judge granted Spears and her parents a restraining order against Lutfi, paparazzo Adnan Ghalib and a lawyer who the Spears family claim tried to regain control of the singer's life.

The lawsuit, which does not seek a specific dollar amount, provides pages of Lutfi's version of events, including his claim that he urged the singer to reconcile with her parents and that he was acting in her best interests.

Spears' family has contended otherwise. Lynne Spears once accused him of grinding pills into her food to control her, a claim he denies in his lawsuit.

The 27-year-old Spears has a resurgent career with a new album and tour planned, both of which have occurred since a court granted her father, Jamie, control over the singer's personal and financial affairs.

An e-mail and phone call sent to Spears' publicist seeking comment was not returned.

Lutfi also alleges that Jamie Spears punched him in the chest last year after accusing him of making a rude remark to the singer's mother, Lynne. Lutfi claims the incident happened in the midst of Britney Spears' downward spiral, just days before her father was granted the conservatorship.

AP

In this Sept. 7, 2008 file photo, Britney Spears poses with her awards backstage at the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards in Los Angeles.

A phone message left with Jamie Spears' conservatorship attorney was not immediately returned.

Lutfi's libel and defamation claims heavily cite Lynne Spears' recent book, "Through the Storm," and says it's filled with "false statements."

He claims the Spears' actions have caused him to suffer "humiliation, mental anguish and emotional and physical distress." Lutfi's lawsuit also claims he has received death threats and "has been subjected to unfathomable amounts of ridicule and public scorn."

Lutfi is also seeking unspecified damages based on an oral contract he claims he and Britney Spears forged in 2007. The suit states the agreement called for him to serve as Spear's manager for four years and receive 15 percent of her earnings. He claims the singer confirmed the contract in a text message.

Spears renounced her friendship with Lutfi last year in a statement issued through her court-appointed attorney. The remarks came after an agreement was apparently reached that Lutfi wouldn't try to contact Britney Spears.

Attorneys for Spears' father claimed in court filing last week that Lutfi sent text messages to Spears and her father recently, and that he, Ghalib and attorney Jon Eardley engaged in a campaign to try to take control of Spears' interests in the conservatorship.

A hearing on whether the restraining order should be extended is scheduled for later this month.

New episode of 'Grand Theft Auto' adds new music

NEW YORK (AP)—When "Grand Theft Auto IV" debuts another downloadable episode later this month, there'll be not only new story lines and characters, but also new music for the ride.

Busta Rhymes, Funkmaster Flex and others have been added to music stations on the radio dial in "The Lost and the Damned," an episode that features hours of new content for the popular video game, which released the fourth part of its series to great fanfare—and sales—last year.

Rhymes is also debuting a new song, "Conglomerate," exclusively for "Grand Theft Auto."

Music supervisor Ivan Pavlovich said the featured songs are a key component of "Grand Theft Auto," so they updated five of the radio stations in the game, including a hip-hop station and rock stations.

"Unlike movies, where you have a particular song that goes with a particular scene, what we do with the stations is really kind of allow each player to individualize how they want to play the game and how they set the tone," he said.

To that end, they've enlisted DJ Funkmaster Flex to make a show for the game's fictional Liberty City, which sits right outside of a New York-type metropolis. Rhymes' music is not only featured on the Flex channel, he also is interviewed by Flex.

The station also gives the rapper a chance to promote his upcoming CD and music, and fans can purchase songs they tag during play later on iTunes.

"It kind of shows the reach of video games to influence people to buy music," said Pavlovich. "That's why it's important for people like Busta, when they have new material. He is pushing an album in this. ... That's part of the whole thing that we do that's really important to us, is turning people on to new music. "

The new episode of "Grand Theft Auto IV" will be available on Xbox Feb. 17.

Elton John to close Las Vegas show

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Elton John is playing his final notes on the red piano in Las Vegas.

Promoters say the pop singer will close his Las Vegas Strip show, "The Red Piano," on April 22.

The show made its debut in February 2004 at The Colosseum theater at Caesars Palace. After initially signing on for 75 shows, John's engagement was extended.

The casino says the closing show will be the 241st performance. The offbeat production blends the singer's top hits with elaborate video montages created by photographer and director David LaChappelle.

Tickets for the final engagement go on sale Thursday. John's show alternates with other Colosseum headline acts, including Bette Midler and Cher.

A casino spokeswoman said there was no word on a replacement.

AP

This Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2005 file photo shows American Idol judges Simon Cowell, left, Paula Abdul, center, and Randy Jackson, right, as they answer a question at a news conference during taping auditions of the show in San Francisco.

'Idol' axes 43 hopefuls in 1st round in Hollywood

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Hollywood was just a layover for the 43 hopefuls cut Tuesday during the first round of Hollywood Week on "American Idol." The 147 contestants plucked from nationwide auditions performed an a cappella song of their choosing on the Kodak Theatre stage with 104 singers advancing to the next step in the Fox singing competition.

Paula Abdul and Simon Cowell briefly sparred when hopeful Erika Wesley pleaded with the judges to give her a second chance. Abdul told Wesley she wanted her to advance, but the other three judges voted against her.

Cowell called Abdul out, noting that she had actually written down a "no" vote. Abdul claimed he could not read her handwriting.

'Bounty Killer' accused of running 7 red lights

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP)—Jamaican rapper Bounty Killer is in trouble with police—again.

Traffic court spokeswoman Alicia Dennis says he is accused of running through seven red lights. Police have charged him with refusing a breathalyzer test, obstructing traffic and disobeying a red light.

He appeared in court on Monday and will stand trial May 12. His attorney refused to comment.

The rapper already had been charged with using profanity while performing at the island's Reggae Sumfest in July. It was his second arrest at the annual festival. He was detained in 2001 after an altercation with another performer.

He is best known for the album, "My Xperience," and his collaboration on the song "Hey Baby" with No Doubt.

Jim Belushi to ride in Orpheus parade

In this July 30, 2007 file photo, actor Jim Belushi arrives for the premiere of "Underdog," in New York.

AP

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Jim Belushi is heading to New Orleans this month to celebrate Mardi Gras and ride in the glitzy Orpheus parade founded in 1993 by Harry Connick Jr.

The 54-year-old Belushi will be one of several TV stars on the parade's 35 floats, which will roll through the city Feb. 23, the evening before Mardi Gras.

Also riding are actor Bryan Batt of TV series "Mad Men," comedian Carlos Mencia, former "American Idol" contestant Josh Gracin and daytime TV stars Christian LeBlanc of "The Young and the Restless" and Ricky Paull Goldin of "All My Children."

Belushi, the star of ABC's "According to Jim," also will perform with his 14-piece band, the Sacred Hearts Band, at the Orpheus ball after the parade.

Joe Francis placed on house release

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A federal judge has ordered Joe Francis to serve house arrest until his next hearing on tax evasion charges.

The "Girls Gone Wild" founder was arrested Monday after showing up to a scheduled court hearing several hours late. U.S. District Court Judge James Otero released him Tuesday morning, but ordered him to wear an electronic monitoring device and remain at home until a Feb. 11 hearing.

Francis wrote in a statement issued after his release that he was sick with the flu and tried unsuccessfully to seek a delay in Monday's hearing.

Francis has pleaded not guilty to two counts of federal tax evasion. His trial is scheduled to begin in March.

Jonas Brothers visiting CW with concert film peek

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Love them or not, the Jonas Brothers just keep popping up.

The CW network says the singers will host a night of programming Feb. 10 that includes the dramas "90210" and "Privileged." They'll provide a sneak peek of their new 3-D concert film based on their "Burning Up" tour.

Fans looking for a musical performance will get a clip of the group performing the hit song "Tonight." Last month, the Jonas Brothers performed at the White House for presidential daughters Malia and Sasha Obama and at a children's inaugural concert.

Mom maintains friendships with daughter's old beaus

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: From the time when I was a teen, whenever a romance of mine ended, my mother would continue having her own relationship with the ex, regardless of how I felt about it.

Over the years she has attended my ex-husband's wedding, still visits with my former high school boyfriend, contacts my sister's ex-boyfriend—the list goes on and on. Not surprisingly, this issue has generated some heated exchanges.

Now my adult daughter is experiencing the same thing. She recently ended a three-year relationship, and guess where Mother ended up? She drove 20 miles to visit him in his store, although there are plenty of other stores she could have gone to nearby.

I have long felt that I didn't matter much to her since my exes were so important to her. But seeing the pain this has brought to my daughter makes me furious all over again. Should we just never introduce her to anyone in our lives until the wedding?

SICK OF THE EX-FACTOR

DEAR SICK OF THE EX-FACTOR: You're within your rights to do that. However, I find it odd that not only does your mother have such a hard time letting go of these men, but also that all of them seem to have a hard time letting go of her. I could see this happening once—but that it's happening with all of them seems peculiar.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: I am an obese woman who had the lap band procedure done three months ago. I am now able to eat only three or four ounces of food at a time, and I am starting to show some major weight loss.

What do I say to people with whom I go out to eat when they think I am being finicky or snobbish for not eating my entire meal? I have gotten some pretty weird stares, and one of my co-workers believes I have an eating disorder.

Abby, I would prefer not to come out and say that I have had weight-loss surgery, but I don't want people worried about me either. Any suggestions?

MINI-ME IN TEXAS

■■■■

DEAR MINI-YOU: So many people in this country have serious weight problems, I see no reason why you shouldn't be frank about what you decided to do about yours. It's not shameful, and it should not be a guilty secret. People who know you well will find out eventually.

However, if you are determined not to reveal that you had the surgery, when you eat out in restaurants, order only an appetizer. That way less food will remain on your plate.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a retired guy who likes to stay in shape, so I run and hike in a neighborhood park several times a week.

I was brought up to be friendly and outgoing, so I make a point of saying "hi" to everyone I pass. I don't expect anything in return, but it puzzles me that so few people (about one in six) will give a mannerly old guy the courtesy of a nod or a smile, much less a hello.

Is this the new etiquette? Women are excused, for obvious reasons, but interestingly, the prettiest ones do say hello. Any thoughts on this?

FRIENDLY IN BERKELEY

DEAR FRIENDLY: Maybe the less "pretty" ones are so winded they can't respond. So keep jogging and don't let it get you down.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

WHAT'S THIS?
A CRASH TEST DUMMY. NOW I CAN SEE IF THE HILL IS SAFE TO GO DOWN.
OFF YOU GO!
© 1989 Universal Press Syndicate
OOH, I THINK I'M GOING TO BE SICK.
WELL I WOULDN'T HAVE STEERED LIKE THAT.' HE DESERVED IT.'
2/5

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

IT SAYS HERE, "HOT DOG HANK" WAS ACCOSTED AND ROBBED IN BROAD DAYLIGHT TODAY...
WHAT'S THIS WORLD COMING TO?
JIM DAVIS 2-5
www.garfield.com
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THE THIEF GOT AWAY WITH EVERYTHING IN HIS CART
TRAGIC
BURP
DO YOU SMELL SAUERKRAUT?
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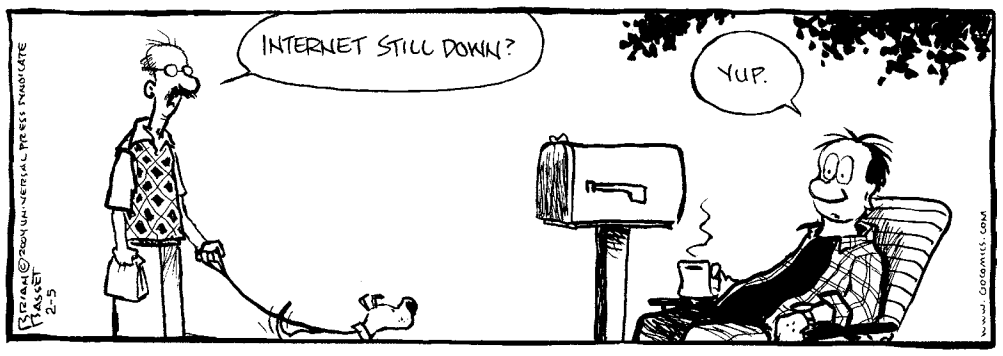
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

ALL OUR OPERATORS ARE BUSY. YOUR CALL IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US.
BUT NOT IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO HIRE MORE OPERATORS.
2-5
© Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Queequeg's captain
5 Chanteuse Edith
9 Scarlet
12 "Unforgettable" singer
13 Head light?
14 Overseas agreement?
15 Dentist's task
17 Bobby of hockey lore
18 Maintain meagerly
19 "Robinson Crusoe" author
21 Either's partner
22 Stair part
24 "Listen!"
27 Lapdog, for short
28 Weak, as an excuse
31 Carnival city
32 Prune
33 Train component
34 Clean Air Act target
36 Approves
37 Terrier type
38 Sail supports
40 Tagged player
41 Offer bait
43 Scents
47 Eggs
48 One of the Rushmore quartet
51 Obtain
52 Emanation
53 Facility
54 Indivisible
55 Get ready
56 Lento

DOWN
1 Farm fraction
2 Coat-rack feature
3 Burn remedy
4 Caused (oneself) to go
5 Excellent, in modern lingo
6 Author Fleming
7 Carte lead-in
8 Creases
9 Luggage holder, often
10 Franc replacement
11 Catastrophic
16 Contemptible canine
20 Sushi fish
22 Castles
23 Little devils
24 Storefront sign abbr.
25 Intention
26 Dorm companion
27 Whodunit basis
29 Spring period
30 Anteceding
35 Hiatus
37 Ranges
39 Guitar attachment
40 Rage
41 Not "for here"
42 Divisible by two
43 PDQ
44 Repast
45 Additionally
46 Ragout, e.g.
49 "— Town"
50 Raw rock

Solution time: 25 mins.

A	S	A	P	■	L	O	S	■	M	O	D	E
M	A	L	A	■	I	A	M	■	A	F	A	R
O	F	F	S	H	O	R	E	■	E	F	T	S
K	E	A	T	O	N	■	L	E	S	S	E	E
■	■	■	A	P	E	■	L	E	T	T	■	■
I	D	O	■	I	S	M	■	K	R	A	F	T
T	U	F	T	■	S	O	T	■	O	G	R	E
S	O	F	A	S	■	B	U	B	■	E	Y	E
■	■	S	K	I	S	■	N	U	S	■	■	■
T	S	H	I	R	T	■	E	M	P	I	R	E
A	E	O	N	■	O	F	F	S	I	D	E	S
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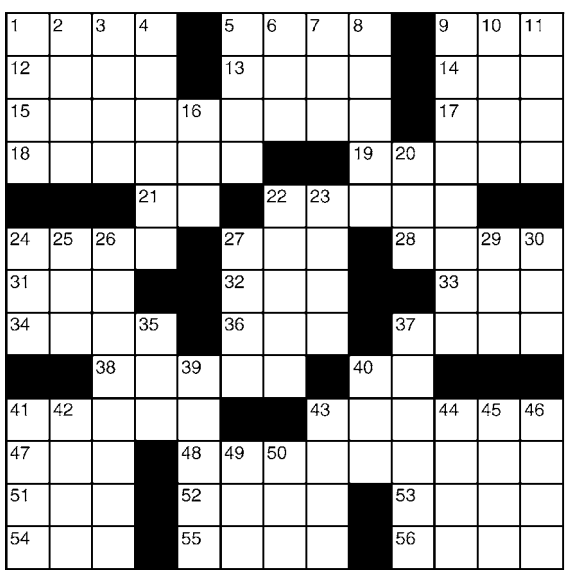
Yesterday's answer 2-5



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jennifer Jason Leigh, 47; Christopher Guest, 61; Barbara Hershey, 61; Roger Staubach, 67

Happy Birthday: Consistency and your ability to make good judgment calls will lead to your success. Added responsibilities may seem daunting, but the experience you gain and the connections you make will be well worth your while. An unusual change at home and in your personal life will help you realize what you want more than anything else. Your numbers are 9, 16, 20, 22, 26, 39, 41

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You may want to make changes and reforms but do you have time to take on extra responsibilities? Weigh the pros and cons. Someone is likely to be jealous of you and what you are trying to do. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Timing is everything. Wait and observe before making a life-altering move. It's optimism that will help you get ahead, not trying to make someone else look bad. Don't take risks or mishaps will occur. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Interacting with others will lead to advancement. Mix business with pleasure and don't hesitate to talk about your ideas, intentions and future. Face-to-face conversations will bring you closer to success. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Don't be surprised by what you are offered today. There is money to be made and opportunities to take advantage of. Get promises in writing and take care of any pending legal or financial matters swiftly. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): The more you socialize and network, the better your chances for success. You are entering a new phase in your life that must be utilized to the fullest. An offer on your part will be well received and will bring you a favor in return. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): It will be the detail you put into everything you do that will put you on top. Strive to be unique and take full credit for what you do. Have the confidence to promote and present yourself and your ideas. Follow talks with action. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): It's conversations with the people who can change your life that will help you secure your position and lead to your advancement. There is no room for laziness or a lack of enthusiasm. Leave nothing to chance. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Someone may be giving you a bill of goods to try to get you to invest. Protect your assets. Problems at home can be rectified with professional help. Know with whom you are dealing and ask questions if something isn't clear. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Be prepared to say no if you have to. Personal matters will escalate if you don't recognize the sensitive nature of the issues developing. Face the situation head on and give your own assessment of it—whether financial, personal or professional. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Listen but don't take over if you don't have to. Added responsibilities will drag you down and take away from your personal time, causing problems. Take another look at an offer that was made in the past. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Once you have your mind made up, stick to it. The time to be strong is now. By taking a stance you will attract new friends and gain the respect and support of the people in your life who count the most. ✪✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You may disappoint someone who can create problems for you if you haven't been honest. Spend more time developing, planning and creating something that will work before you decide to present, promote and take action. Falling short of what's expected will be your downfall. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are unique, creative and totally unpredictable. You are mysterious, hardheaded and passionate about your beliefs and relationships.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

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					3			7
8		4				3		
					9		1	
5				4				2
	3		1					
		9				2		5
6			4					
	4			7		9		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/05

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

7	9	6	4	5	1	8	3	2
1	4	3	7	8	2	6	5	9
8	2	5	9	6	3	4	1	7
6	7	9	3	2	5	1	8	4
5	1	8	6	7	4	2	9	3
4	3	2	8	1	9	7	6	5
2	5	7	1	3	8	9	4	6
3	8	4	2	9	6	5	7	1
9	6	1	5	4	7	3	2	8

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/04

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

MICHAEL CRICHTON (1942-2009) **Solution: 10 letters**

P	A	(C)	T	I	O	N	D	R	A	V	R	A	H	D
G	L	N	(A)	X	I	G	A	L	C	P	E	F	I	L
T	N	O	N	(S)	E	S	R	O	R	O	H	T	U	A
A	O	I	T	A	(E)	N	N	E	J	O	A	W	E	N
Y	Z	T	S	S	Z	G	Y	O	A	P	W	I	I	G
L	A	C	C	I	O	U	H	S	P	T	L	S	R	E
O	M	I	O	S	R	N	S	A	L	U	Z	T	A	Y
R	A	F	Y	H	T	A	K	T	R	E	S	E	M	R
E	Z	E	R	O	L	A	S	I	E	E	V	R	E	E
C	I	C	U	R	T	O	T	R	M	R	P	O	N	F
U	R	N	R	E	L	E	O	E	E	B	U	S	N	F
D	R	E	B	E	R	O	T	C	O	D	E	T	A	E
O	E	I	K	R	A	P	C	I	S	S	A	R	U	J
R	H	C	O	M	A	T	M	I	C	H	A	E	L	F
P	S	S	G	E	N	R	E	N	Y	L	S	O	R	Y

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Action, Amazon, Anne-Marie, Author, Case, Coma, Congo, Cool, Create, Doctor, Future, Genre, Great, Harvard, Jasper, Jeffery, Joan, John, Jurassic Park, Kathy, Kimberly, Lange, Life, Lost, Michael, Next, Novels, Phi Beta Kappa, Plots, Prey, Producer, Readers, Rising, Roslyn, Science Fiction, Sherri, State, Suzanna, Taylor, Twister, World, Zero, Zula

Yesterday's Answer: Canopache

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THREWAND

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Opening Date: 02/04/09 Closing Date: 02/18/09

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LOCATION: *COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION,* ***SAIPAN***

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Opening Date: 01/26/09 Closing Date: 02/06/09

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Admin Support Asst.	Power Division	09-004
Admin Support Tech.	Power Division	09-005
Meter Technician	Power Division	09-006

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Saipan Tribune

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Cavs remain perfect at home, trip Toronto

CLEVELAND (AP)—That's 23 and climbing.

LeBron James scored 33 and eclipsed 12,000 points for his career, and the Cleveland Cavaliers remained flawless on their floor by winning their 23rd straight home game, 101-83 over the Toronto Raptors on Tuesday night.

James became the fastest player in NBA history to reach the 12,000-point plateau. At 24 years, 35 days, he did it quicker than Los Angeles superstar Kobe Bryant, who was 25 years, 220 days, when he did it.

Daniel Gibson scored 18 and Mo Williams 16 as the Cavaliers broke the club record for consecutive home wins set during the 1988-89 season. Cleveland, which built a 23-point lead in the first quarter, also became the first team since the 1949-50 Rochester Royals to win their first 23 home games by at least four points.

Chris Bosh scored 29 and Jermaine O'Neal 20 to pace Toronto.

Trailing by 19 at halftime and showing little fight, the Raptors regrouped and outscored the Cavaliers 26-15 in the third quarter to close to 74-66 entering the fourth.

Cleveland shot just 4-of-18 from the field in the third, and too often settled for outside jumpers instead of attacking the basket.

But that changed midway through the fourth when James, who did not make a field goal in the second half, decided it was time to put Toronto away.

First, he was fouled on a drive and made both free throws. On the Raptors' next trip, James challenged a soaring Bosh on a dunk attempt and got just enough of the ball to alter its course. James was again fouled while powering inside and made his free throws - he finished 13-of-13 at the line - to make it 87-75.

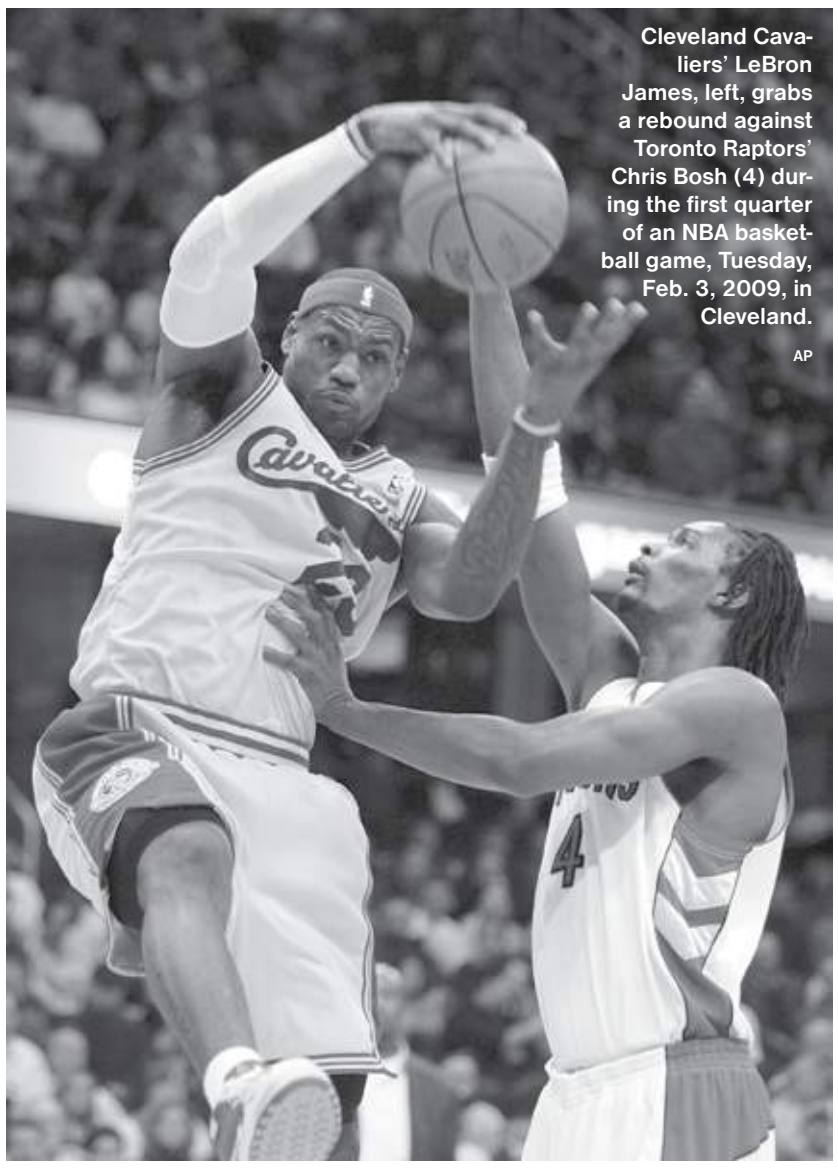
Gibson's 3-pointer made it 90-75 and the Raptors were unable to get any closer.

James, the Eastern Conference's player of the month in January, scored 16 in the first quarter and had 25 in the first half on an array of shots. Nearly everything dropped for Cleveland's All-Star, who will now head to Madison Square Garden on Wednesday and possibly take aim at Bryant's scoring record in the "world's most famous arena."

Bryant scored 61 on Monday night against the Knicks, and New York coach Mike D'Antoni is well aware that James could rewrite the record book quickly.

"We set the bar up high for him. He'd have to play really well," D'Antoni said.

It's rare that he doesn't. James scored 50 at the Garden last season, leaving the court to chants of "M-V-P!" just as Bryant did.



Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James, left, grabs a rebound against Toronto Raptors' Chris Bosh (4) during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2009, in Cleveland.

AP

Celtics 100, 76ers 99

At Philadelphia, Ray Allen took a perfect pass from Paul Pierce and buried a baseline 3-pointer with 0.5 seconds left to give Boston its 12th straight victory.

Andre Iguodala had just hit a fallaway jumper for a 99-97 lead for Philadelphia, which led the entire fourth quarter until the final basket.

Pierce scored 29 points, Allen, 23 and Glen Davis had 12 points and 11 rebounds.

Iguodala scored 22 points and Andre Miller had 21 for Philadelphia.

Timberwolves 116, Pacers 111

At Indianapolis, Randy Foye scored 19 points, and Minnesota snapped a three-game skid with a victory over Indiana.

Sebastian Telfair and Ryan Gomes each scored 16 points, Kevin Love had 15 points and 11 rebounds and Al Jefferson had 12 points and 15 rebounds for the Timberwolves.

Danny Granger scored 28 points, Mike Dunleavy scored 20 and Troy Murphy added 17 points and 12 rebounds for the Pacers, who have lost back-to-back home games.

Rockets 107, Bulls 100

At Houston, Yao Ming scored 28 points, and Luis Scola scored 13 points and matched a career high with 18 rebounds as Houston beat Chicago.

Aaron Brooks scored 18 and Tracy McGrady added 16 for the Rockets, who've won six straight and 11 of 12 games against the Bulls.

Luol Deng scored a season-high 28 and Ben Gordon scored 20 for Chicago, which had a three-game winning streak snapped.

Nets 99, Buck 85

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, Vince Carter had 15 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds for his fifth-career triple double as New Jersey downed Milwaukee to spoil Richard Jefferson's homecoming.

Brook Lopez had 22 points and 12 rebounds to complement Carter, who had his third triple-double with the Nets and first since April 4, 2002, against Washington.

It was the first time back in New Jersey for Jefferson, who spent his first seven seasons with the Nets, after being dealt for Bobby Simmons and Yi Jianlian this past summer.

Although he started off the night by missing his first three shots, Jefferson finished by hitting 7-of-16 from the field to lead Milwaukee with 27 points.

Nuggets 104, Spurs 96

At Denver, Carmelo Anthony scored 35 points to lead Denver over a under strength San Antonio after nearly frittering away a 17-point lead.

The Spurs are without Tim Duncan, Tony Parker and Manu Ginobili. Ginobili has a bruised hip, and coach Gregg Popovich said he decided to give Duncan and Parker the night off in Denver following the Spurs' overtime win at Golden State Monday.

Anthony had to come back into the game with 8:47 left and the Nuggets clinging to an 80-78 lead. His return had an immediate impact as he spaced the floor and the Nuggets suddenly had open looks and went on a 9-0 run.

Magic's Nelson out with shoulder injury

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—All-Star point guard Jameer Nelson could miss the rest of the season for the Orlando Magic because of a torn labrum in his right shoulder.

An MRI exam revealed the injury Tuesday, the team announced.

Nelson will decide over the next week whether he will have surgery or attempt rehabilitation. If surgery is the option, his season is likely over. If he passes on the surgery, he'll likely miss several weeks.

"At some point in time, he's going to have to have surgery. That's a given. There's no ifs, ands or buts about it," Magic general manager Otis Smith said Tuesday.

Nelson left the Magic's 105-95 loss to the Mavericks on Monday night in the third quarter after he was fouled by Dallas center Erick Dampier and hit the floor. Nelson came up bent over and clutching his right shoulder before heading to the locker room in pain.

The injury leaves the Southeast division-leading Magic (36-11) with a major hole.

Orlando does not have a third point guard behind backup Anthony Johnson. The Magic likely will have to sign another point guard, or convert shooting guards J.J. Redick and Courtney Lee.

Smith said he had "zero" regrets about not signing an extra point guard earlier. Now, he's hoping to fill the gap by signing a free agent.

"I don't think anything's off the table," Smith said. "We're actively pursuing (a deal), and have been since last night."

Nelson was having a career season, averaging 16.7 points and 5.4 assists per game. He was selected to his first All-Star Game and was to compete in the skills challenge Feb. 14 in Phoenix.

The Magic host the Los Angeles Clippers on Wednesday night.

"It's a big blow for us," center Dwight Howard said after Monday night's loss. "I'm trying not to even think about it because he had been playing so well for us. It's a sad day for us all."

Nelson missed five games earlier this season with a right hip injury, and Orlando managed to go 4-1 behind Johnson.

A longer stretch against significantly better competition will provide a tougher test.

"We've done it before so we'll do whatever we have to do," Magic coach Stan Van Gundy said.

If the Magic can take any comfort in the loss, it's that they have time to regroup before the playoffs.

Pot charge possible after Phelps' pipe photo

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)—Olympic superstar Michael Phelps could face criminal charges as part of the fallout from a photo that surfaced showing the swimmer smoking from a marijuana pipe at a University of South Carolina house party.

A spokesman for Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott, who is known for his tough stance on drugs, said Tuesday the department was investigating.

"Our narcotics division is reviewing the information that we have, and they're investigating what charges, if any, will be filed," said Lt. Chris Cowan, a spokesman for agency.

The photo first shown in British tabloid News of the World on Sunday was snapped during a November party while Phelps was visiting the university, according to the paper.

Phelps, 23, and his team have not disputed the photo's accuracy. Phelps has issued a public apology, acknowledging "regrettable" behavior and "bad judgment" after the photo appeared.

One of Phelps' agents, Drew Johnson, said Tuesday authorities had not contacted the swimmer. "So we really can't speculate," he said.

Last fall, Phelps was introduced to large applause at South Carolina's football game with Arkansas. He met with players and visited with Gamecocks coach Steve Spurrier, who gave Phelps one of the ball coach's trademark visors.

Phelps also spoke at a university class on sports' role in society.

Where exactly the party occurred isn't clear. The university said its police have no evidence it was on campus, and city police said they won't pursue criminal charges unless more information comes forward.

The Richland County sheriff can pursue charges as long as the party was in the county, the spokesman said.

"The bottom line is, if he broke the law, and he did it in Richland County, he's going to be charged," Cowan said. "And there's no difference between Michael Phelps and several other people that we arrest for the same type of a charge everyday."

Under South Carolina law, possession of one ounce or less of marijuana is a misdemeanor that carries a fine up to $200 and 30 days in jail for the first offense. Possession of paraphernalia is a $500 fine.

The Richland County sheriff has long sought to fight drug crimes. He rose from patrol officer to captain of the narcotics division in the early 1990s, after the television series "Miami Vice" made its splash.

Lott played the part well. He wore stylish suits and had long hair then. He drove a Porsche seized from a drug dealer and even worked undercover with federal agents in Florida.

U.S. Olympic gold medalist Michael Phelps reacts after hitting his knee on the table during a press conference at the 3rd Global Competitiveness Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009.

AP

Steelers' fans gather downtown to celebrate title

Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver and Super Bowl MVP Santonio Holmes, center, is introduced on stage by linebacker Larry Foote, right, at a rally after their Super Bowl victory parade in Pittsburgh, Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2009.

AP

PITTSBURGH (AP)—Thousands of Pittsburgh Steelers fans lined downtown streets Tuesday cheering and twirling Terrible Towels at a parade celebrating the team's victory over the Arizona Cardinals in Sunday's Super Bowl, the sixth for the storied franchise.

Fans of all ages came from across the state, and country, and one youngster even brought along a replica Vince Lombardi trophy made with tin foil. In buildings along the parade route, office workers cheered through open windows. Dozens of people packed the floors of a parking garage to get a better view and some shelter from snow showers and temperatures in the 20s.

"It's history in the making," said Chad McGown, 31, who staked out his place on the parade route hours earlier.

Even the police got into the spirit, waving their own Terrible Towels from atop horses as they led the parade. Coach Mike Tomlin followed behind in the back of a red convertible, while players holding their personal video cameras cheered and waved from the back of pickup trucks.

City officials prepared for as many as 250,000 fans, an estimate based on the number of fans at the 2006 parade celebrating the team's previous Super Bowl victory. Many fans showed up hours before Tuesday's parade, including a handful of hardy souls who were camped out on the route before dawn.

Shawn Sedonis, 40, and his son, Garrett, 8, arrived about 8:30 a.m. Garrett was holding a cardboard sign saying, "Sorry Teach, I Have Sixburgh Fever"—to explain his absence from Buffalo Elementary School in the suburb of Sarver.

"I was here for the last parade and this is his first parade," the bearded Shawn Sedonis said, decked out in a black-and-gold jester hat, game jersey and other team items. "The last time they expected 40,000 people and there were 40,000 people here by 10 o'clock. So we came early."

Annette Mowery, 47, of Mars, came to the parade with her daughter Lexie, 12, and son, Lucas, 10, who also both skipped school.

"They have the Steeler fever today," Mowery said.

Six local high school bands were marching in the parade, one for each championship won by the team.

The parade was planned along Grant Street and Boulevard of the Allies, two of the widest streets downtown, instead of a narrower route used for most city parades. About 150 police were on hand to control the crowd and barricades were set up in the streets because the sidewalks were not wide enough to accommodate the overflow.

A huge black and gold banner hung in front of the City-County building, reading "Welcome to Steelers Country Super Bowl XLIII Champions." The City Council voted to symbolically change the city's name to Sixburgh for the day, as the Steelers are the first team to win six Super Bowls.

Down the street in front of the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, a dinosaur statue held a Super Bowl trophy in one hand and had red feathers protruding from its mouth, what was left from its "Cardinal snacks."Die-hard fans like 42-year-old Becky Kimball drove up from Baltimore just to help celebrate the big win.

"We're here to tell you us Baltimore girls love Hines Ward," Kimball said, flanked by daughters Karlie, 12, and Elizabeth, 9.

Teresa Nestor, 47, came downtown after getting only three hours of sleep. She had been in Tampa for the Super Bowl, then drove home and arrived at her house in Uniontown at 3 a.m. Tuesday. After a quick rest, she made the 50-mile drive north to Pittsburgh for a spot near the reviewing stand at the end of the route.

"This takes precedence over everything that's ever happened in my life, this win," Nestor said.

Erin DelGreco, 34, of Hopewell Township, and her friend left their twin suburbs about 20 miles northwest of the city about 6 a.m. and claimed spots along the parade route about 7 a.m.

"Where else in the world does this kind of stuff happen?" DelGreco said about 9:30 a.m. "Look at all the people already here and we've still got 2 1/2 to 3 hours to go."

Vince Brown, 37, drove about four hours, in traffic, from his home in Clarksburg, W.Va. With his 9-year-old daughter sitting on his shoulders, he was standing with his family about 75 yards from where the parade was to end. He couldn't see or hear much, but that didn't matter.

"If I didn't make it across the river, it would still be worth it," Brown said.

Raiders keeping Tom Cable as head coach

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—The Oakland Raiders retained head coach Tom Cable on Tuesday, officially removing the interim designation from his title more than five weeks after their season ended.

Cable went 4-8 after replacing Lane Kiffin with the Raiders (5-11), who have lost at least 11 games in six consecutive years. Cable, Kiffin's former offensive line coach, rallied Oakland to back-to-back victories to end last season.

Raiders owner Al Davis interviewed a handful of candidates for the job, but never seemed seriously inclined to replace Cable, valuing his organizational loyalty and leadership. Davis spoke to New York Giants offensive coordinator Kevin Gilbride and Green Bay assistant head coach Winston Moss before sticking with Cable, the former Idaho head coach who joined the Raiders in 2007.

Cable's hiring, to be announced at a news conference on Wednesday, will bring some stability to a coaching staff that's already undergoing wholesale changes even with Cable staying in charge. Cable, who represented Oakland at the Senior Bowl in Alabama last month, has argued that keeping him would bring stability to a club already on its fifth head coach since 2003.

But several key assistant coaches who finished the season under Cable's leadership already have left the Raiders for new jobs, including defensive coordinator Rob Ryan (Cleveland), offensive coordinator Greg Knapp (Seattle), special teams coordinator Brian Schneider (Southern California), running backs coach Tom Rathman (San Francisco) and linebackers coach Don Martindale (Denver).

While waiting to announce Cable's hiring, Davis filled several positions on the Raiders' new staff, hiring a few new assistants and retaining several others. Oakland notably picked veteran offensive coach Paul Hackett to be JaMarcus Russell's quarterbacks coach.

With a head coach finally in place, the Raiders can get to work hiring coordinators. They're also deep in preparations for the draft, in which they have the seventh overall pick.

Cable went 11-35 in four seasons in charge at Idaho from 2000-03 in his only previous experience as a head coach before Davis promoted him to replace Kiffin, who was fired Sept. 30 after a series of embarrassing public disagreements with Davis. Cable spent 2006 as Atlanta's offensive line coach following two years as UCLA's offensive coordinator.

The Raiders responded favorably to Cable over the final 12 games of the regular season, pulling together for back-to-back wins over Houston and Tampa Bay to close another dismal year on a high note. Although 5-11 isn't much, Oakland finished with its best record since 2004, when Norv Turner led the Raiders to the same mark.

Cable follows Bill Callahan (2002-03), Turner (2004-05), Art Shell (2006) and Kiffin (2007-08) in charge of the Raiders, who haven't had a winning season since Callahan led Oakland to the Super Bowl in his first season after replacing Jon Gruden.

McCourt: Dodgers still want Ramirez

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Dodgers are still trying to bring back Manny Ramirez. Only the enigmatic slugger doesn't like their latest deal.

He rejected their third offer—for one year—that would have made him baseball's second-highest paid player behind Alex Rodriguez.

That leaves Ramirez unsigned three months after deciding to test his value in the recession-plagued free agent market, with the Dodgers the only team to have confirmed making any offers.

"We have interest in signing Manny," general manager Ned Colletti told The Associated Press in an e-mail Tuesday. "We don't have a deadline but these situations can change in an instant and either side can change them in an instant."

The Dodgers open spring training for the first time in Arizona on Feb. 14.

Team owner Frank McCourt said the team still wants Ramirez back, but "at some point, we have to move on," he was quoted by MLB.com, which attended McCourt's hospital visit to cancer patients along with the Los Angeles Times on Tuesday.

The latest deal—a one-year, $25 million offer—was rejected Monday. It would have given Ramirez the second-highest average salary behind New York Yankees third baseman Rodriguez's $275 million, 10-year contract.

"We came up with what we thought was a creative proposal to give him a lot of money, and well deserved in a challenging economy, and give him flexibility if he feels it's important to test free agency next year," McCourt told MLB.com. "I don't see long-term contracts happening in this market we're in."

Ramirez, who turns 37 in May, is believed to be seeking a four- or five-year deal starting at $25 million per season.

"We'd love to sign Manny," McCourt told MLB.com. "But we have to be prudent with our decisions. This is about winning now, but also in the future."

Colletti initially tried to re-sign the left fielder, offering a two-year, $45 million deal with a buyout or a club option that was ignored by Ramirez's agent Scott Boras and later withdrawn by the team.

"The agent is challenging to work with and we've tried hard," McCourt told MLB.com. "We've made three efforts and we still have not received a specific number from the agent, and I don't know what to tell you. At some point, you have to move on and start to get ready to win a championship."

The Dodgers' second attempt involved salary arbitration in December, but Ramirez said no to that, too.

The San Francisco Giants have confirmed interest in Ramirez, but like the Dodgers, they are believed to be reluctant to guarantee a long-term deal.

Yankees general manager Brian Cashman reiterated Tuesday that his team will not pursue Ramirez.

"I do hear the rumblings. People expect us to get in on Manny. But that's not going to happen," Cashman said. "We're tapped."

"I hope he stays in the National League," the GM added. "Let him stay out on the West Coast."

IT&E outlasts Docomo in Budweiser caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

IT&E endured Docomo's fourth-quarter rally and eked out an 86-80 win in the 2008-2009 BANMI/Budweiser Basketball League Monday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The victory gave IT&E a 2-0 start, while the loss dropped Docomo to a 0-2 slate.

Gyles Ruluked nailed seven of his nine points in the fourth quarter, including five of IT&E's last eight points to help his team thwart Docomo.

IT&E led by 12 points, 66-54, going into the fourth quarter, but instead of going for the kill, it slowed down allowing Docomo to mount a comeback.

Ed Diaz nailed two triples, Mark Wallace had one, and James Villacrusis scored seven straight markers at one point in the third period to lead Docomo's rally.

Ruluked answered with his own barrage of points, canning five consecutive markers to halt Docomo's rally.

After Ruluked's straight baskets, IT&E secured the win from the free throw line with Peter Mendiola splitting his charities and Jun Estolas going 2-for-2.

Docomo led only in the first period, 21-19, with Wallace and Diaz trading outside shots.

But IT&E grabbed the driver's seat at halftime, 36-31, with Kae Bernardo making 10 straight points in the second half to match Docomo's total output in that canto.

In the third quarter, IT&E widened the gap, as Bernardo continued to barrel his way in the paint adding 10 more points. Wowie Abuel and Ivan De Vero chipped in six apiece in the third to help IT&E take a 12-point lead.

In the second game, the Runnin' Rebels ran out of gas in the fourth period, allowing Quichocho Law Office to cruise to an 87-70 victory.

Quichocho Law Office played its first game in the league and outscored the Runnin' Rebels in the fourth period, 34-18 en route to an impressive debut in the seven-team competition.

Quichocho Law Office was ahead by only a point, 53-52, at the end of the third period, when Sonny Lerio led the team's breakaway, drilling five triples in the fourth period.

Lerio finished with a game-high 28 points, making eight triples, while Bonbon Cadagat added 14 markers and had 11 assists. Darwin Barbo also had a double-double contributing 15 points and 16 rebounds. He added three assists, five steals, and three blocks for an all-around game.

First Game

IT&E 86 – Bernardo 29, Estolas 17, Abuel 9, Ruluked 9, De Vero 8, Artates 7, Ranola 5, Mendiola 2.

Docomo 80 – Wallace 27, Diaz 25, Ja. Villacrusis 11, Fitial 9, Palacios 4, Manibusan 2, Jo. Villacrusis 2.

Scoring by quarters: 19-21, 36-31, 66-54, 86-80.

Second Game

Quichocho Law Office 87 – Lerio 28, Barbo 15, Cadagat 14, Palero 10, Umali 9, Capalad 5.

Runnin' Rebels 70 – Iguel 24, Norita 19, Tumaquip 19, Ogumoro 9, Coldeen 6, Kenty 2.

Scoring by quarters: 19-17, 39-37, 53-53, 87-70.

Jets face Legislature, No Zone meets Law & Order

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Joeten Motors Jets will face Legislature, while No Zone will meet Law & Order in the 2008-2009 Budweiser Inter-Government/Business Slow-pitch Softball League tonight at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

The Jets and No Zone currently share fourth to fifth places with identical 8-3 win-loss cards.

The Jets won its previous game after rallying from a sluggish start before coming home with a 18-9 victory over P&S last Jan. 29.

Legislature is in solo sixth with an 8-4 record, while lowly Law & Order is in 15th place at 3-8.

Game time for the Jets-Legislator match is scheduled at 6:30pm.

The Jets will be led by pitcher Shane Tenorio, Cliff Saul, J.J. Cabreara, J.J. Laniyo, Ben Taisacan, Jess Taitano, Dung Tenorio, Myron Sablan, Ernest Rangamar, Hector Efraim, Donald Flores, and Jason Reyes.

Legislator hopes to get timely plays from Paul Lizama, Ross Manglona, Ben Camacho, Toi Celis, Fonze Tarope, Mitch Aaron, Bill Olaitiman, Chico Ilo, Pete Towai, Perry Besong, Dennis Cabrera, and George Camacho.

The No Zone-Law & Order tiff will start at 7:30pm.

Both teams just came off similar sorry losses with No Zone losing to Docomo last Jan. 29, while Law & Order dropped its game against DLNR via forfeit due to lack of players.

No Zone will be banking on Ken Kalen, Nick Guerrero, Jerry Ayuyu, Ned Norita, Manny Sablan, Frank Pangelinan, Carl Hocog, Bruce Norita, Jess Wabol, Ed Diaz, and Norris Kwon.

It will be a battle between cellar-dwellers in the 8:30pm third game as Mayor's Office squares off against Hopwood Junior High School.

Mayor's Office carries a 2-10 record, while the league's favorite whipping team, Hopwood, is still in search of its first win of the season following 11 starts.

BACK-TO-BACK

From Page 28

the ball from midcourt.

He passed the ball to Elmer Esdrelon, who escaped his defender from the left sideline, drove to the middle and was sandwiched by Concepcion and Mendez.

Esdrelon missed the shot and in the battle for the loose ball, Mendez tapped the ball to Jomary Tumaquip, who dribbled to their frontcourt as time expired.

Cadagat top-scored for MIGS with 44 points, exploding for 11 triples and making most of them from the left side of the court. Concepcion added 17, while Sonny Lerio added 14 before fouling out early in the fourth quarter. Mendez finished with 10, drilling his lone field goal in the fourth that gave MIGS the lead.

Esdrelon paced Athlete's Foot with 27 points.

Sunday's Game

MIGS 115 – Lerio 38, Johnson 17, Cadagat 10, Palero 9, Capalad 9, Concepcion 9, Mendez 9, Itibus 4, Hugos 2.

Mobil 105 – Estolas 34, Lauron 25, Cortez 14, Gomez 6, Anasan 3.

Scoring by quarters: 28-21, 46-49, 68-all, 115-105.

Tuesday's Game

MIGS 100 – Cadagat 44, Concepcion 17, Lerio 14, Mendez 10, Tumaquip 6, White 4, Omampo 1.

Athlete's Foot 99 – Esdrelon 27, Joyner 22, Arreza 16, Usi 14, Guiab 7, Fernandez 2.

Scoring by quarters: 17-20, 49-46, 78-82, 100-99.

NMASA

From Page 28

the Year Award.

They are swimming's Rezne Wong, tennis' Ji Hoon Heo, triathlon's Eli Torgeson and Tyce Mister, athletics' Jack Kabiriel, baseball's Nicky San Nicolas, and basketball's Jericho Cruz.

Wong won the monthly title five times getting Male Athlete of the Month citation in February, April, May, October, and November. Torgeson won twice, taking the monthly plum in March and July.

Heo prevailed in February tying Wong, Kabiriel won in June, San Nicolas in August, Mister in October, and Cruz in December.

The 2008 Female Athlete of the Year, meanwhile, will be a clash among eight athletes.

Swimming and triathlon have the most nominees with three apiece, while football and athletics have one apiece.

Nominees from swimming are Sarah Johnson, Marystar Welch, and Grace Kimball. Triathlon has Mieko Carey, Maimi Shimizu, and Maimi Oshima-Berger. Completing the list are Yvonne Bennett of athletics and Becca Newman of soccer.

There are nine nominees—the most for the year—for the 2008 Male Student Athlete of the Year.

The list includes Heo, Rafael Jones, Kai Staal, Christian Miller, Trevor Ogumoro, Kensuke Kimura, Caleb Arriola, Raphael Zapanta, and Jericho Cruz.

Among the nine, only Staal of swimming got multiple monthly titles having won the award three times.

The race for the 2008 Female Student Athlete of Year, for its part, will be among teammates.

Saipan Swim Club bets Abigail Martinsen and Grace Kimball are nominated for the prestigious award, along with tracksters Jackie Wonenberg and Lia Rangamar, and Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan's Marystar Welch and Angel Marie Tan.

Rounding off the list are tennis' Thea Minor and basketball's Roxanne Duenas.

Of the eight, Rangamar was the only multiple winner in different sports. She won the monthly award in April for athletics leading Marianas High School to a title in the women's division of the NMA All Schools meet. In October, she earned the same award after anchoring the CNMI Women's Junior Nationals fight in the Oceania Youth Tournament in Guam.

Athletes who will be selected for the top awards will be recognized at the NMASA Sports Banquet scheduled later this month. Also to be feted during the awards ceremony are the 2008 Coach of the Year and the 2008 inductee for the Sports Hall of Fame.

Venue for the banquet will be announced later.

MT. CARMEL

From Page 28

and two points for SDA, which earlier lost to CCA (15-36) on Jan. 22, to SIS (2-52) on Jan. 27, and to Saipan Community School (14-44) on Jan 29.

In the girls division, Mt. Carmel also easily defeated SDA, 27-18, to improve its record to 2-1, while dealing SDA girls their third loss in as many games.

The Lady Knights dropped their first assignment to GCA, 12-32, last Jan. 22 and won over SCS last Jan. 30, 42-35.

Vanessa Bortolo led the team with 14 points, while CNMI Junior National player Kaylani Lebria added 11 and Rachel Borja had two.

Also on Tuesday, the SCS Tsunamis won at home over the visiting CCA, 32-9.

The win was the Tsunamis' second straight after bowing out to their rivals in their first two games this year. They lost to SIS, 3-54, last Jan. 22, and to GCA, 23-38, on Jan. 27 before finally barging into the win column with a 38-16 win at home over SDA.

CCA is now 1-3 after winning its first game against SDA. It then dropped its next three assignments to MCS, GCA, and SCS.

Justin Poon led the Tsunamis anew with 14, while James Ko finished with eight and Eron Constante had six.

Albert Lee and Ji Hoon Choi scored four points each for CCA, while Jin Han Yoon scored one from the free throw line.

SCS 32 – Poon 14, Ko 8, Constante 6, Kim 4, Tudela 0, Lam 0, Johnson 0.

CCA 9 – Lee 4, Ji 4, Jin 1, Perez 0, J. Fidelino 0, Valeros 0, M. Fidelino 0, Yue 0, Alamer 0.

Scoring by quarters: 6-1, 12-3, 18-7, 32-9.

MCS girls 27 – V. Bortolo 14, Lebria 11, Borja 2, A. Taylor 0, Yamada 0, Che 0, Naraja 0, Alvarez 0, Kautz 0, Demapan 0, Sabla 0, Sablan 0.

SDA girls 18 – D. Taylor 10, Richards 4, Mendiola 4, Jin 0, S. Taylor 0, Kim 0.

Scoring by quarters: 7-4, 15-8, 19-12, 27-18

MCS boys 48 – Kautz 12, Saludez 10, Flores 8, Taguchi 6, Alvarez 4, A. Kim 4, Mizer 4, T. Lee 0, Crisostomo 0, JW Kim 0, V. Lee 0, Aldan 0.

SDA boys 11 – Palacios 5, Iba 4, A. Shakir 2.

Scoring by quarters 10 -4, 20-4, 30-4, 48-11

NMA

From Page 28

School System representatives with Nick Gross of Marianas High School representing secondary and middle schools and Ronald Olopai of San Antonio Elementary School for primary schools.

Private schools have a lone representative in Saipan Community School principal Bobby Winkfield.

Completing NMA's set of officers for 2009 season were board members Penny Jones and Meng Rangamar.

NMA is the governing body for all athletics events in the CNMI. It is part of a strong 21-member Oceania Athletics Association and was the host of last year's Oceania Grand Prix Series and Oceania Regional Championships.

The two regional tournaments took place at the Oleai Sports Complex and featured world class athletes from Australia and New Zealand, and the 19 other members of OAA.

After the election of officers for 2009, NMA is expected to buckle down to work with the CNMI National Championships and the All Schools Meet on top of its agenda.

The two local tournaments are usually held in May and have student-athletes from primary, middle, and secondary schools competing in field and running events.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	41	9	.820	_
Philadelphia	23	24	.489	16 1 / 2
New Jersey	22	27	.449	18 1 / 2
New York	21	26	.447	18 1 / 2
Toronto	19	31	.380	22

Southeast Division

Orlando	36	11	.766	_
Atlanta	27	20	.574	9
Miami	26	21	.553	10
Charlotte	19	29	.396	17 1 / 2
Washington	10	38	.208	26 1 / 2

Central Division

Cleveland	38	9	.809	_
Detroit	25	21	.543	12 1 / 2
Milwaukee	24	28	.462	16 1 / 2
Chicago	21	28	.429	18
Indiana	19	30	.388	20

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	33	15	.688	_
New Orleans	28	17	.622	3 1 / 2
Houston	30	19	.612	3 1 / 2
Dallas	28	19	.596	4 1 / 2
Memphis	12	35	.255	20 1 / 2

Northwest Division

Denver	32	16	.667	_
Portland	30	17	.638	1 1 / 2
Utah	27	22	.551	5 1 / 2
Minnesota	17	30	.362	14 1 / 2
Oklahoma City	11	37	.229	21

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	38	9	.809	_
Phoenix	26	20	.565	11 1 / 2
Golden State	15	34	.306	24
Sacramento	11	39	.220	28 1 / 2
L.A. Clippers	10	38	.208	28 1 / 2

Yesterday's Games

Boston 100, Philadelphia 99
Cleveland 101, Toronto 83
Minnesota 116, Indiana 111
New Jersey 99, Milwaukee 85
Houston 107, Chicago 100
Denver 104, San Antonio 96

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER STANDINGS

IT& E	2	0
CNMI Nationals	1	0
Quichocho Law Office	1	0
Ol'Aces	1	1
Runnin' Rebels	1	2
Diamond Auto Fixers	0	1
Docomo	0	2

NAVY HILL STANDINGS

Dollar Days	5	0
RBC Rollers	4	0
Docomo	4	1
MBI	3	2
MIGS	3	2
Uncle Ben	2	1
Inchcape	2	3
Athlete's Foot	2	3
IT& E	1	3
670 Rollers	0	2
San Antonio Shooters	0	4
Mobil	0	5

Santos, Soriano top 8-ball tourneys

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Eric Santos and Jerry Soriano ruled separate Thursday Night 8-Ball Open tournaments held at Round Two Bar and Grill last month.

First to stamp his marks in the 8-ball tilt was Santos, who prevailed over 11 other players in a tournament last Jan. 22.

Santos won his opening match against Joseph Achas and gained his second win after downing Chester Hamoy.

In the next round, Santos defeated Patrick Taitano to advance to the semifinals. Santos gained the first finals ticket after whipping Soriano in the winners' bracket semis.

Soriano was relegated to the losers' bracket, but still moved into the finals after outclassing Senen Pangilinan.

In the championship, Santos was given a twice-to-beat advantage for sweeping the preliminaries.

Soriano threatened for an upset when he beat Santos in Game 1, but the latter recovered in Game 2 to secure the championship trophy and the $80 cash prize.

Soriano settled for the $40 runner-up prize.

Other cue artists who participated in the Jan. 22 tournament were Jomer Enriquez, Chester Hamoy, Joey Lucido, Primo Ferrera, Marvin Cabo, Victor Hocog, and Boyet Sequico.

After a runner-up finish in the Jan. 22 tournament, Soriano redeemed himself the following week, besting 15 other participants in the Thursday Night event.

Soriano was paired against Pangilinan in the first round with the former winning.

Soriano's next victim was Mel Usi and the former topped Patrick Taitano to gain a semis entry against Rolly Villanueva.

In the winners' bracket semis, Soriano thwarted Villanueva giving the former a twice-to-beat advantage in the finals.

In the losers' bracket semifinals, Villanueva had to slip past Chester Hamoy to earn a rematch with Soriano.

The rematch produced the same results allowing Soriano to take home the $80 cash prize and a trophy. Villanueva pocketed $50, while Hamoy received $30 for finishing third.

The last Thursday Night tournament for January also featured Santos, Taitano, Ferrera, Enriquez, Achas, Mico Usi, Juancho Mendoza, Bill Limes, Ron Chisato, Bubba Culpepper, and Taylor Watanabe.

Thursday Night 8-ball Open winners Jerry Soriano, left, and Eric Santos, center, are joined by tournament participant Senen Pangilinan in a group photo taken at Round Two Bar and Grill last month.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Entry forms now available for The Art of War III

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The next mixed martial arts competition on Saipan will be held on March 14 when Trench Tech holds The Art of War III at the Trench Tech Gym in Afetnas.

According to Trench Tech president and promoter Cuki Alvarez the Art of War III would be an Abu Dhabi style No-Gi tournament with six different weight classes to be contested. These are bantamweight, featherweight, lightweight, middleweight, heavyweight, and super heavyweight.

The MMA event is a follow-up to the successful staging of Rites of Passage VI held last Jan. 24 at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort.

Fighters may contact Alvarez or Randy Taylor for more details at 483-4MMA or 483-8670.

For the spectators, the entrance fee would be $5. They can make their early reservations now.

Trench Tech said it is expecting some 100 grapplers from around the CNMI. There would also be competitors from the Philippines.

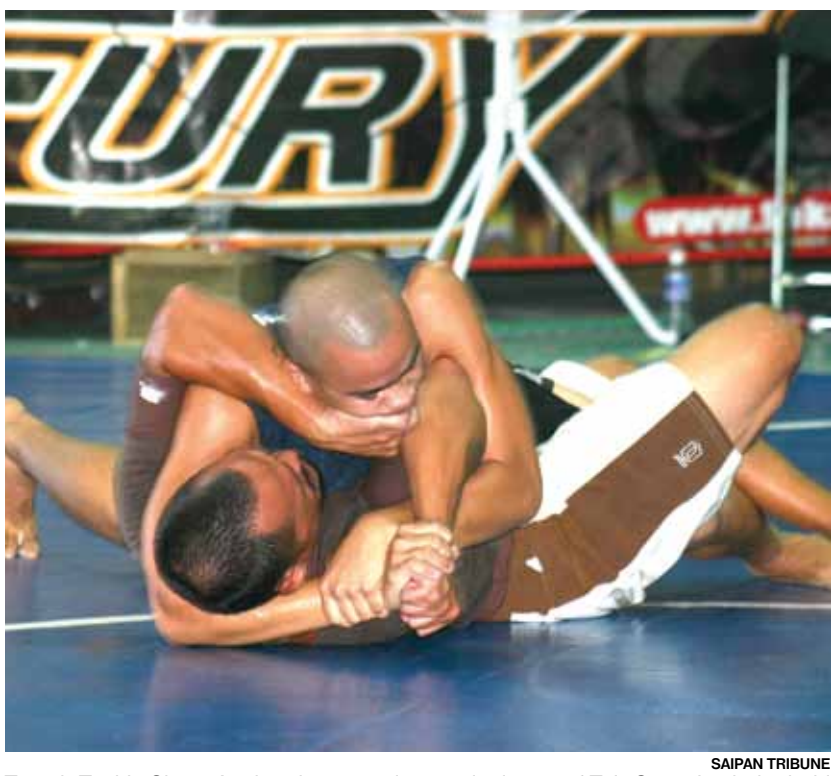
The fights will include brown belt and black belt pairings.

The Rites of Passage VI: Conviction and the Art of War III: All-Island Grappling/Submission Challenge are just two of the big MMA events to be staged on Saipan this year.

Trench Tech promised more of these kinds of events not just for the sake of fighting but also to make friends.

"We fight to gain more friends," he said.

Organizers have started donating some of the proceeds of the event to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.



SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Trench Tech's Sixtus Aquino, bottom, tries to wiggle out of T.J. Castro's choke hold in their welterweight division bronze medal match in last year's Art of War II. Aquino won the bronze.

Lai keeps RGA January Ace

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Joe Demapan fell two strokes shy of beating the score of qualifying tournament winner Cui Xian Lai, allowing the Chinese golfer to secure the Refaluwasch Golf Association January Ace title.

Demapan fired a net 66 in Sunday's RGA tournament at the Coral Ocean Point to lead 26 other participants. But Demapan's 66 was a shot behind Lai' s 65, which the latter recorded during RGA's qualifying tournament last Jan. 17.

RGA holds two tournaments in a month to determine the monthly Ace winner. The golfer who notches the lowest net after two tournaments takes the Ace and a slot to the year-end RGA Cup.

Lai also participated in Sunday's tournament nailing a net 68 and prevailing in a three-way tie for third against Gus Camacho and Jesse Seman.

The 13-handicapper Demapan was alone on top during the weekend tournament after drilling a 38 and 41 on the front and back nines, respectively, for a gross 85.

New RGA member J.J. Atalig had an impressive debut finishing second with his net 67. The 18-handicapper Atalig was consistent at the Agingan Point course making a 42 and 43 on the front and back nines, respectively.

The 20-handicapper Lai had a 43 on the front and 45 on the back and his net 33 after the first nine holes allowed him to beat Camacho (34) and Seman (35.5) for third place.

The 8-handicapper Camacho recorded a 38 on both nines for a gross 76, while Seman had a 40 on the front and a 37 on the back for a gross 77.

There was also a tie for sixth to eighth place with Ray Villagomez outclassing Tom Tebuteb and Asterio Tawanpiy on the scorecard playoff on the front nine.

The 17-handicapper Villagomez shot a net 35.5 on the front, while Tebuteb posted 38 and Villagomez canned a 36.5. All three golfers had a net 69.

The 18 other RGA members who joined Sunday's tournament were: Sonny Flores (70), Ben Duenas (70), Tars Olopai (70), S. Jin Kim (71), Louie Tilipao (72), Bae Young Man (72), Jess Wabol (72), Manny Mangarero (73), Joe Wabol 975), Ben Bae (77), Dwaine Stephens (77), Carl Hocog (77), Ray Tigilau (78), Jay Choi (78), Joe Limes (79), Tony Rogolifoi (80), Jordan Kosam (85), and Vince Attao (86).

Lai won the closest to the pin contest on hole No. 7, while Jess Wabol prevailed in hole No. 14.

Meanwhile, tournament director Jess Wabol thanked RGA president Kosam and his wife Bettylou for hosting a luncheon for club members Sunday.

Wabol also announced that RGA's February qualifying tournament will be held on Feb. 14 at the Marianas Country Club.

For more information, contact Kosam at 483-4506 or Wabol at 288-1129/233-3673.

Crime Stoppers Softball Tournament starts Friday

The 10th Annual Crime Stoppers Softball Tournament will kick off this Friday, February 6, 6:15pm at the Capitol Hill Baseball Field.

Department of Public Safety commissioner Santiago Tudela will be throwing the opening pitch at 6:20pm. A total of 10 co-ed teams have signed up to play this year.

Last year, Wells Fargo Financial Wranglers claimed the 2008 Crime Stoppers Softball Tournament at the Dandan Elementary School Ballfield.

J.J. Laniyo played the hero's role after he singled in a run to help Wells Fargo, formerly known as No Ka Oi, to a 5-4 win over PTI in the tournament finals to complete the Wranglers' back-to-back title bid.

It was Wells Fargo's fourth straight win after going undefeated in the elimination round that earned them the top seeding and first finals berth.

The Wranglers scored consecutive wins against Pacific Islands Club and United Micronesian Development Association in the eliminations, then defeated PTI in the semis to earn the first finals berth.

Technically, it was the Wranglers' fifth straight crown since most of its members are from perennial title winner No Ka Oi. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Custom Goodwill Golf Tournament moved to Feb. 15

Custom Goodwill Golf Tournament has been rescheduled from Feb. 14 to Feb. 15.

The location has also been changed from Marianas Country Club to Kingfisher Golf Course.

Tee-off time is still at 12pm. For tickets or more information, call J.J. Atalig at 483-0400 or Dave Cepeda at 664-4876.

In related news, the San Jose Church Golf Tournament will be held on March 14 at the Kingfisher Golf Links in Talafofo.

The tournament will adopt a double Peoria format and will award $300 for first place, $200 for second place, and $150 for third. Consolation prizes also await players who finished from fourth to 10th places. ***(PR)***

Santos, Soriano top 8-ball tourneys

Eric Santos and Jerry Soriano ruled separate Thursday Night 8-Ball Open tournaments held at Round Two Bar and Grill last month.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Cavs remain perfect at home, trip Toronto

That's 23 and climbing. LeBron James scored 33 and eclipsed 12,000 points for his career, and the Cleveland Cavaliers remained flawless on their floor by winning their 23rd straight home game, 101-83 over the Toronto Raptors.

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Back-to-back wins posted by MIGS

MIGS' J.R. Concepcion stretches for a layup against Mobil's Emir Abuan, center, and Alex Lauron during their game in the Navy Hill caging Sunday at the CIC Centre Basketball Court in Garapan.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

MIGS notched back-to-back wins in the 2009 Navy Hill Friendship Basketball League, including a thrilling 100-99 victory over Athlete's Foot Tuesday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Before slipping past Athlete's Foot, MIGS played Mobil Sunday night at the CIC Centre Basketball Court and won easily, 115-105.

Two days after its 10-point win, MIGS met a tougher opposition in Athlete's Foot before pulling off a come-from-behind victory.

Bonbon Cadagat, J.R. Concepcion, and Walter Mendez delivered the crucial plays for MIGS in the last 2:04 of the game to escape with a one-point win.

Athlete's Foot still was leading by four, 100-95, when it lost the ball at midcourt. Cadagat picked up the leather and had Joseph White ahead of him in a fastbreak play. Cadagat instead of passing the ball to White, who was several steps away from his defender and was closer to the basket, opted for a triple and missed.

Athlete's Foot grabbed the rebound, but Sam Fernandez could not hang on to the ball and lost it to the sideline returning possession back to MIGS.

Cadagat made up for an earlier bad decision when he canned a triple from the left key moving MIGS within one, 98-99, with 1:30 left on the clock.

Despite having a lot of time left on the clock, Athlete's Foot decided to rush things with Junar Guiab going for a drive-and-draw play, which faltered as Rommel Usi failed to catch the former's drop pass underneath the basket.

Cadagat muffed a triple in the next offensive set, but Concepcion was there for the offensive rebound. After claiming the ball, Concepcion pulled up for a shot and was blocked by Guiab, but Mendez was at the right place at the right time for another offensive rebound and banked a shot to give MIGS the lead, 100-99, with less than minute left in the game.

Again, Athlete's Foot chose not to settle things down on offense and paid the price when Jawn Joyner muffed a fallaway jumper.

MIGS countered with a miss shot and Athlete's Foot had a chance to regain the lead when the ball went out of bounce in favor of the former, with 11 seconds left in the payoff period.

Athlete's Foot had a timeout left, but did not use it, as Guiab quickly inbounded

See BACK-TO-BACK on Page 26

NMASA to pick top athletes tonight

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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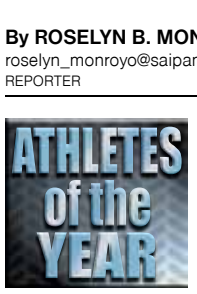
REPORTER



Selection for the top athletes of 2008 will be made tonight when the Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association holds its monthly meeting at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

NMASA members will pick the 2008 Male and Female Athletes of the Year and the Male and Female Student Athletes of the Year.

White

NMASA president Michael A. White said the association's members will be choosing the top performers of 2008 based on the candidates accomplishments.

"There are no written criteria for selection of athletes of the year. NMASA members will look at the accomplishments of the nominees and decide who most deserves the award," White said.

Seven athletes will be slugging it out for the 2008 Male Athlete of

See NMASA on Page 26

Mt. Carmel too strong for SDA

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

The boys and girls teams of Mt. Carmel School proved too much for host Seventh Day Adventist in the 2009 Coalition of Private Schools Sports Association basketball league.

The visiting Knights outgunned and out-rebounded the undermanned SDA boys on Tuesday to score a 48-11 win, their third in four starts this season.

Champions in 2007, the Knights opened their campaign with a 33-15 win over the Grace Christian Academy Eagles on Jan. 22 then followed this up with another 33-15 triumph over Calvary Christian Academy on Jan. 27.

The Knights, however, absorbed a 22-43 defeat in the hands of Saipan International School on Jan. 29 then vented their ire on SDA, which was compounded by a depleted lineup.

MCS nicely shuffled its 12 heftier and quicker players, while SDA could not muster enough firepower from its seven players.

Big men Tomas Kautz and John Saludez finished in double figures, 12 and 10 points, respectively, for the Knights, while Jonah Flores and Ken Taguchi added eight and six.

Three others—Ronnelson Alvarez, Andrew Kim, and Chris Mizer—had four points each.

Playmaker Tyler Palacios shot eight points to lead SDA, which remained winless after four games.

Vincent Iba and Aamir Shakir contributed four

See MT. CARMEL on Page 26

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Jonah Flores of Mount Carmel looks for an open teammate as Tyler Palacios of SDA tries to block his way at center court.

NMA elects '09 officers

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Kurt Barnes was voted president of the Northern Marianas Athletics during the association's election Tuesday night at China House Restaurant.

Barnes will also serve as director of masters affairs.

Also re-elected were Lou Wabol as vice president; Robin Sapong, secretary general and treasurer; and Elias Rangamar, director of coaches development.

Barnes

NMA also named directors of various committees. They were Kae Moses, director of officials; Doris Rangamar, director of women's affairs; Lawrence Camacho, director of equipment and facilities; Gabriel White, director of marketing and sponsorship; and Allan Moses, director of road races and cross country.

Two teachers were selected Public

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